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A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

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Dana Heupel



## Blagojevich hits the TV circuit in 'the worst way'

by Dana Heupel

**I** like most everyone else, I believe it's time for former Gov. Rod

Some interviewers, such as Letterman, did their best to try to win the gov

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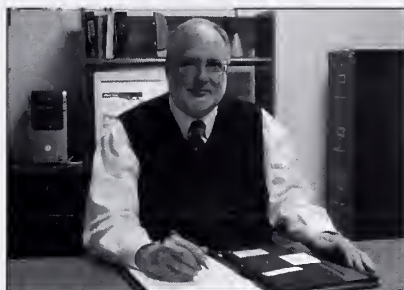
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Dana Heupel



## Blagojevich hits the TV circuit in 'the worst way'

by Dana Heupel

**L**ike most everyone else, I believe it's time for former Gov. Rod Blagojevich to fade away. But his national media blitz before and after he was removed from office deserves revisiting — hopefully for the last time — because it highlights the often fuzzy line between news and entertainment.

Blagojevich conducted more than 20 interviews with television, radio and newspaper outlets, according to his public relations firm, The Publicity Agency, whose trademarked motto is “We Know News.” He was arrested on federal corruption charges last December 9, and his Illinois Senate impeachment trial ended with his conviction and expulsion from office January 29.

Despite questioning by more than a score of commentators during his frantic quest for media exposure, he stuck to his message:

- I didn't do anything wrong.
- I'm not allowed to bring witnesses who will prove my innocence to the impeachment trial.
- The whole impeachment process is a political vendetta because I refuse to increase taxes and because I've fought to improve the health of children and seniors.

---

*Despite questioning by more than a score of commentators during his frantic quest for media exposure, he stuck to his message.*

- I won't comment on the upcoming criminal trial, but the statements on the prosecution's secret tapes are out of context.
- I'm doing these interviews because I don't want my young daughters to believe their father did anything wrong.

Time and again, Blagojevich repeated those mantras on such programs as NBC's *Today* show, CNN's *Larry King Live* and *Campbell Brown: No Bias, No Bull*, Fox News' *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren* and *Fox & Friends*, MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*, ABC's *Good Morning America* and *The View* and CBS's *The Late Show with David Letterman*, among a dozen others.

Some interviewers, such as Letterman, did their best to try to pin the governor down on specifics; others, such as Geraldo Rivera, let him perform his routine without subjecting him to tough questions. The flamboyant Rivera even shouted down state Rep. John Fritchey when Fox brought the Chicago Democrat on to try to add some context.

Day after day, Blagojevich kept showing up on network after network, until what may have started out as news morphed into merely nuisance. And by and large, the venues were not “hard news” shows, where he might have faced an adversarial interviewer, but so-called “news and entertainment” programs, where the hosts are more used to making conversation with celebrities and cultural icons.

In all, most of the interviewers did all right, but they didn't venture far from their comfort zones. The bulk of the questions were of the “how did it feel when ...” variety, and the follow-ups were few. That's to be expected, though. Blagojevich was there mostly as a curiosity; the interviewers' purpose wasn't to bore audiences, who had turned on their programs to be entertained, or make them uncomfortable.

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And Blagojevich has proven time and again that he can be charming and glib when he needs to be.

Letterman probably asked the best question of all: "Why exactly are you here, honest to God?"

Blagojevich deflected: "Well, you know, I've been wanting to be on your show in the worst way for the longest time."

Letterman then hit the served-up pitch with the expected response:

"Well, you're on in the worst way, believe me." It drew laughter and applause from the audience.

The talk show host later did demonstrate that he had done some homework by playing a taped conversation between Blagojevich and his brother about a campaign contribution the governor expected from a horse-racing lobbyist, then asking Blagojevich why he stressed that he needed the contribution before the end of the year. But he let the former governor get by with responding that he wanted to make the end-of-December reporting deadline. If Letterman knew that the more probable reason was because a new law restricting contributions was set to take effect January 1, he didn't let on. But that probably would have drawn the conversation too far into minutiae for Letterman's purposes, anyway.

The interview venues undoubtedly were calculated on the part of Blagojevich and his PR firm, though I'm not sure anyone — perhaps not even Blagojevich — knows the real answer to Letterman's "why exactly are you here" question. And the sardonic host may well have been directing it as much to his own producers as to the former governor.

But after all was said — and said and said — in all the interviews, much was still left unexplained. Blagojevich's problems aren't new. The *Chicago Tribune* first reported the federal investigation into whether administration insiders were trading board appointments and contracts for campaign contributions in June 2004. This isn't a recent reaction to his being recorded as apparently trying to auction off the U.S. Senate

seat vacated by President Barack Obama.

Also, throughout Blagojevich's time in office, he and his administration made it a public point to flout state and federal regulations. He spent \$2.6 million in an attempt to import flu vaccine from Europe — which was never used — when he knew the federal government would not permit it. He authorized the importation of prescription drugs from Canada, which clearly violated FDA regulations. And he implemented a quasi-universal health care program after a legislative committee that normally signs off on such initiatives refused to approve it. Whether those actions were criminal remains to be seen. But in doing so, he alienated nearly every governmental entity he needed to work with.

And Blagojevich was allowed to profess over and over again during the interviews that his purpose in choosing Obama's replacement was to do the best he could for the people of Illinois. However, the court papers filed after his arrest contain a taped conversation in which he states his motives as "our legal situation, our personal situation, my political situation. This decision, like every other one, needs to be based upon that. Legal. Personal. Political."

Had Blagojevich permitted himself to be interviewed by more traditional journalists than talk show hosts, he might not have skated on those and other issues. And he knew that.

Because a lot of newspapers and other mainstream media are facing tough financial times, many are turning away from traditional hard news and filling their pages and broadcasts with more stories that are meant to entertain readers more than inform them. There certainly is a place for that — I'm addicted to many of those aforementioned news-talk shows myself. But as more news outlets move toward entertainment and away from interviewers who confront their subjects, readers and viewers need to keep in mind that there is an important distinction. □

*Dana Heupel can be reached at heupel.dana@uis.edu.*

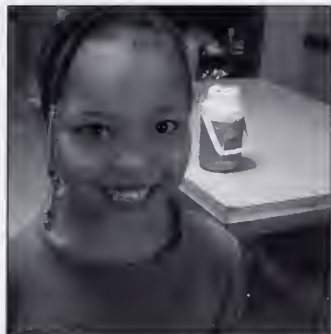


# Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

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Bethany Jaeger



## Dire economic conditions should force state lawmakers to budget every penny

by Bethany Jaeger

**G**ov. Pat Quinn and state legislators will have to be held accountable on spending this year. They can't afford not to be.

Without help from a federal stimulus package, the state could face up to a \$9 billion deficit. Declining revenues merge with overdue bills for an ominous picture. And that's before the nation's economic crisis is fully taken into account.

Quinn said last month that drafting a "rescue plan" may take "the wisdom of Solomon" and maybe even "divine intervention." But, he said, "we will do our very best to find the fairest, most balanced way to dig out of a \$9 billion deficit that I've inherited from my predecessor," former Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Quinn delivers his first budget address March 18. He says he doesn't favor tax increases, but they are on the table. Economists say that won't be enough. The state would need all three — more revenue, less spending and federal aid — to start to recover from the economic crisis, made worse in Illinois by years of over-promising and underfunding state services.

The national recession clearly is taking a toll on Illinois' revenue outlook. The forecast looks worse than it did in November, according to the legislature's bipartisan Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. It says revenues for the current fiscal year, FY 2009, would be \$1.34 billion less than the level budgeted.

That's partially because this year's

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*The state would need all three — more revenue, less spending and federal aid — to start to recover from the economic crisis, made worse in Illinois by years of over-promising and underfunding state services.*

spending plan assumed the state would collect \$435 million for the sale of the state's 10th riverboat license, but the winning bid for the license came in at only \$125 million — and that money won't be available this fiscal year.

In short, the revenue picture "worsened virtually overnight to nearly \$1 billion less than the previous year," the commission said in its January revenue forecast.

The commission added that it may need to make further adjustments when state income and sales tax revenues decline as the recession unfolds. The cumulative damage: at least \$1.6 billion in delinquent revenue by this month.

Quinn will have to work with legislators not only to bring in more revenue, but to hold the line on spending.

Illinois Comptroller Dan Hynes said

last month that if all spending levels were held flat this coming fiscal year — meaning no increase for education, health care or other programs — then the state faces an \$8.95 billion deficit. That could drop to \$5.94 billion if Illinois received about \$3 billion from a federal stimulus package. But the amount of a stimulus check was fluid as of press time.

Quinn acknowledges that bringing in more revenue through tax increases is extremely difficult when average citizens are losing jobs and health benefits. But he, as well as Democratic legislative leaders, have said that nothing, including an income tax hike, can be ruled out.

Two years ago, business executives who belong to the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago backed an income tax increase on individuals by 1 percentage point, bringing the rate to 4 percent, so long as the state coupled it with reforms to address mounting costs of public employee pensions and retiree health care benefits.

Tom Johnson, president of the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois, says his organization could support the increase if the reforms came along with it. "If those components are not addressed as a part of a fiscal plan," he says, "we have a difficult time addressing the problem only with tax increases. There needs to be cost containment."

In fact, a 1 percentage point increase on the individual tax rate would garner about



\$4 billion. (The current 3 percent rate brings in about \$11 billion.) But some of the new revenue would be returned to low-income taxpayers who qualify for tax exemptions.

Increasing the income tax rate on businesses from 4.8 percent, which currently generates about \$2 billion, to 6.3 percent would raise less than \$1 billion.

In other words, increasing the state income tax rate by 1 percentage point isn't enough to close the current budget gap, let alone pay for new spending.

Quinn repeatedly has said he intends to develop what he deems a fair tax structure, and by appointing former Voices for Illinois Children president Jerry Stermer as his chief of staff last month, Quinn narrowed that statement to a tax structure that is fair "to parents raising kids."

Quinn said: "I saw once that our state gives more tax breaks to those raising thoroughbred horses than it gives to parents raising children. We're going to change that."

Stermer cited the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families as one example of a "fairness strategy" that the administration will consider.

He specifically mentioned the need to ensure that health care providers who care for Medicaid patients receive more timely payments from the state, and he is a longtime advocate for reforming the way Illinois pays for public education. By saying that he and Quinn will keep a clear eye on "future generations of Illinois," such ideas as increasing income taxes to help decrease local property taxes could be in the works.

Balancing tax reforms with the desire to increase funding for education and health care would be tricky when economists say the state needs to spend less, not more.

Spending less, however, could mean cutting some core and politically sensitive government services. The largest expenditure is public education at about \$14 billion, followed by health care and human services for a combined \$23 billion. Such services include Medicaid for low-income and disabled patients, child care and substance abuse treatment.

Alternative cost-cutting measures could include shorting the state's payment into the public employee pension systems. The state must contribute about

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## ***Increasing the state income tax rate by 1 percentage point isn't enough to close the current budget gap, let alone pay for new spending.***

\$1.2 billion next year, but delaying the state's contribution only adds to the growing mountain of debt.

Trimming public employee payrolls is another idea. But Senate President John Cullerton said in January that Illinois employs about the same number of workers today as it did in 1972. And federal officials expressed concerns last month that the Illinois Department of Transportation may be too understaffed to handle construction projects under a new stimulus program.

Quinn said last month that laying off employees during a recession would be counter-productive. State and local governments are one of the largest forces in our economy, he said, "and we have to make sure that it doesn't get paralyzed."

Part of Quinn's plan to revive the state's economy and job growth is to craft a major capital program for road and school construction. Quinn and legislative leaders say they want to tap into federal funds set aside for Illinois. While such a capital bill would put thousands of people to work and help revive construction-related industries, the state would have to put forth its share of the cost before the feds offered matching funds.

In the past, under then-Gov. George Ryan, lawmakers increased vehicle registration fees and liquor taxes to pay for a \$12 billion capital plan.

This year, one of the early proposals is to increase the state tax on motor fuel by 8 cents a gallon, with the revenue strictly reserved for financing a capital program.

The state's portion of the tax on motor fuel has been 19 cents per gallon since 1990. The increase is justified, says David Merriman, a public administration professor with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

He adds that unlike a sales tax, the motor fuel tax is based on gallons, or units, used, so it's reasonable to increase

the real price and counteract the negative effects of traffic congestion and wear and tear on the roads.

Lawmakers so far have questioned the effect on consumers if the price of gas increased to \$4 a gallon, as it did last year.

Merriman says if gas prices skyrocket again, the motor fuel tax would be a relatively small portion of the price consumers pay at the pump. He says legislators could protect some consumers by allowing, for instance, taxicab drivers to levy a surcharge on fares or grant other tax breaks to low-income residents.

Johnson of the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois says the motor fuel tax would be an acceptable way to pay for transportation-related projects, but he says lawmakers won't know how much money they would need to collect in tax revenues until they do two things: 1) stop raiding money from the dedicated Road Fund to pay for day-to-day state operations and 2) define the responsibilities of the state versus local governments in paying for construction and maintenance of school buildings, state facilities and mass transit.

He says with the addition of one-time federal funds, lawmakers would have to be careful to avoid over-promising that the state could afford to pay for ongoing costs once the federal funds ran out.

"That's the planning process," he says. "It's not building expectations that cannot be maintained."

By mid-February, Quinn had not taken a stance on a motor fuel tax increase.

Jim Nowlan, former president of the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois and a senior fellow at the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, says a 1 percentage point increase in the state income tax rate, combined with the federal stimulus package, could help close the budget gap. But lawmakers also would have to hold the line on spending, if not cut some. He adds that the public won't want to pay more in taxes when they don't trust state officials to spend it wisely.

Public officials at every level will have to be held accountable. Otherwise, operating under the same pretenses that the state can provide essential services without fully funding them would be the opposite of penny wise, and it would be far more damaging than pound foolish. □

*Bethany Jaeger can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.*

# BRIEFLY

## NEW ADMINISTRATION The Blagojevich chapter

Photograph by Bethany Jaeger



On the last day of his impeachment trial, then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich asks Illinois senators how they can remove him from office for trying to protect the lives of senior citizens, infants and middle-class families. House prosecutor David Ellis and counsel Michael Kasper get a front-row seat to the presentation.

From his whirlwind media tour in New York to his defiant defense in the Illinois Senate, former Gov. Rod Blagojevich's last week in office brought to the forefront the desire of many to move on from a bizarre period in state history.

Blagojevich apologized for the dramas that unfolded after his December 9 arrest, but he stopped short of apologizing for his actions. "I can't because I didn't do anything wrong," he said to senators hours before they voted 59-0 to remove him from office. They took a second unanimous vote to ban Blagojevich from holding any future office in this state.

"We removed Mr. Blagojevich, former governor, from office for three reasons," Senate President John Cullerton said after the votes. "He has demonstrated a clear inability to govern. He has shown disdain for the laws and processes of this state, and he has deliberately and pathologically abused his power without regard for the people he was elected to serve."

House prosecutor David Ellis pinned his case on the federal criminal complaint, which alleges that Blagojevich devised a series of schemes to bribe, threaten and promise to exchange his official actions as governor for political or personal gain. In his closing arguments, Ellis described two sides of Blagojevich. "When the cameras are on and he thinks the people are listening, he gives a pretty good speech. But I want to talk about the Rod Blagojevich when the camera's off."

Ellis recited the November 12, 2008, transcript of a recorded conversation where Blagojevich allegedly says the decision to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by President Barack Obama would be based on three criteria: "our legal situation, our person-

al situation, my political situation. This decision, like every other one, needs to be based upon that. Legal. Personal. Political."

"Nothing in that statement about the people of Illinois," Ellis said in his closing argument. "Nothing in that statement about the little guy."

Blagojevich maintained his innocence, repeatedly asking senators how they could impeach him for his first-term initiatives of expanding state-subsidized health care to middle-income families, importing doses of European flu vaccine after threat of a shortage and importing cheaper prescription drugs for senior citizens.

"If it was an impeachable offense, then you should have impeached me before I got re-elected," Blagojevich said, referring to his 2006 re-election. "I did this, and then the people of Illinois knew I did it. And then they hired me again."

However, because Blagojevich presented no defense until the last day of the trial, senators said it was too little, too late. He was described as an "unusually good liar" by Sen. Matt Murphy, a Palatine Republican, and a "devious, cynical, crass and corrupt politician" by Sen. Dale Righter, a Mattoon Republican.

"The silence that spoke the loudest was the absence of the governor," said newly elected Sen. Toi Hutchinson, a Chicago Democrat.

Even after his impeachment, Blagojevich continued to appear in national media interviews, proclaiming his innocence and talking about his need of a new job. According to the state Constitution, Blagojevich can retain his pension benefits through the State Employees' Retirement System unless he's convicted of a federal crime.

Bethany Jaeger

Contributing: Hilary Russell and Jamey Dunn

Photograph by Jamey Dunn



The Senate's unanimous vote removes Blagojevich from office.





Shortly after being sworn in as the state's top executive, Gov. Pat Quinn said he's frugal, not cheap. "I am proud of being frugal. I'm a VIP member of the Super 8, and I moved up from Motel 6."

## The Quinn chapter

**G**ov. Pat Quinn received a standing ovation as he took the oath of office as the state's 41st governor January 29, shortly after former Gov. Rod Blagojevich was removed from office.

Quinn immediately set his priorities as tightening state ethics laws, paying the state's bills on time and enacting a long-awaited capital construction program.

"Now it's our job to call upon the people of Illinois to make the sacrifices necessary to address the serious challenges that we have before us," Quinn said moments after becoming governor.

But he faces major hurdles for each of his goals. While his new Ethics Reform Commission is working with a bipartisan legislative panel to advance an ethics package, some of the ideas may face powerful political opposition as lawmakers prepare for their 2010 elections. Other reforms that could be controversial include Quinn's proposal to move the state's primary election date from February to September, reversing last year's action by Democrats to hold an earlier primary election in hopes of bolstering then-candidate Barack Obama's presidential bid.

On the fiscal front, Quinn's goal to pay bills on time collides with Comptroller Dan Hynes' latest estimate that Illinois will face a \$9 billion deficit next fiscal year. Quinn already ordered state agencies to trim their budgets by an extra 1 percent, as well

as limit travel, equipment purchases, contracts and hiring, in an effort to limit the damage this fiscal year.

The capital program, which would fund road and school construction projects throughout the state, would spark economic growth but hinges on finding an agreeable funding source. While Blagojevich refused to consider increasing state income or sales taxes to fund such a program, Quinn says everything is on the table.

"Nobody likes paying taxes," he said last month. "So I think it's important to understand that ... the price of being in a democracy is that citizens agree that they do have to pay taxes in order for the common good. And so we will find a way to have a fair system, which hopefully keeps taxes as low as possible."

Despite the political and financial challenges, Quinn says he follows Abraham Lincoln's philosophy of government of the people, by the people and for the people.

"It is very important that all of us understand that we have a duty, a mission, to restore the faith of the people of Illinois and the integrity of our government and to make sure that all of our elected officials have the confidence of the voters," Quinn said, speaking to constitutional officers and legislators gathered to witness his oath of office. "Together, we can make the will of the people the law of the land, so help us God."

Bethany Jaeger

# LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

*The 96th General Assembly is in full swing after legislative action was delayed by the impeachment hearings and trial of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Now lawmakers are focused on numerous efforts to regain the public's trust, including measures that respond to criminal allegations that Blagojevich raised significant amounts of campaign money from state contractors. Many other ethics reform ideas are expected this spring. Meanwhile, Gov. Pat Quinn is preparing for the annual budget address this month. And the legislature is considering everything from ways to repair the state's budget deficit to encouraging environmentally friendly programs.*

## **Fuel tax increase**

**HB 1** Gasoline and fuel taxes would increase by 8 cents a gallon as a one-time funding source for a major infrastructure and school construction program. It was proposed by Rep. John Bradley, a Marion Democrat.

## **Campaign donations**

**HB 24** Individuals could not contribute more than \$2,300 to an individual or \$5,000 to a political action committee or political organization under a proposal sponsored by Rep. Harry Osterman, a Chicago Democrat. The effort resembles federal restrictions but would limit donations — rather than ban them — from businesses and political action committees.

## **Pork project audits**

**HB 289** The Illinois auditor general's office would get a new wing, responsible for checking to ensure that money designated for legislative members' initiatives was being spent as intended and was going toward necessary projects. The bill, sponsored by Litchfield Democratic Rep. Gary Hannig, also would create a hotline for citizens to suggest grant programs and earmarked spending to be audited.

## **Campaign calls**

**HB 268** People or groups that pay for automated telephone calls that mention a political candidate by name or attempt to influence opinion on public policy during an election year would have to identify themselves during the call. Violations under the proposal by Rep. Bill Mitchell, a Forsyth Republican, would be a Class A misdemeanor.

## **Public access**

**HB 35** Anyone with Internet access could look through an online database that would include information about state employees, state expenditures, business licenses, tax credits for businesses and businesses that have lost their licenses, under a measure proposed by Rep. Michael Tryon, a Crystal Lake Republican.

## **Sex offenders**

**HB 230** The definition of a sex offender would include a person who engages in sexual contact with a consensual partner but chooses not to tell the partner he or she is infected with HIV or AIDS. The measure is sponsored by Rep. Chapin Rose, a Mahomet Republican.

## **International adoption**

**HB 243** To avoid restrictions, an individual could adopt a child from another country without his or her spouse being a party to the adoption, so long as the couple lived together and had been married for at least 12 months. The bill is sponsored by Republican Rep. Robert Pritchard of Hinckley.

## **Heart disease benefits**

**HB 213** State health insurance policies would have to cover diagnostic testing of cardiovascular or heart disease with the referral of a physician, under a proposal by Rep. Michael Smith, a Canton Democrat.

## **Athlete drug testing**

**HB 272** Student athletes would have to take random tests several times through-

out the sports seasons, under a proposal by Democratic Rep. Jack Franks of Woodstock. The Illinois Department of Public Health would regulate the testing, and coaches would have to take a course and an exam on preventing the use of performance-enhancing drugs.

## **Plastic bag recycling**

**HB 334** All grocery stores in Illinois would be required to have programs that allow shoppers to return their plastic bags for recycling, according to a bill proposed by Franks.

## **License plates**

**HB 247** Illinois drivers would be able to order "In God We Trust" license plates for an extra \$20 initial fee and \$20 when they renew the plates, under a proposal by Rep. John Bradley, a Marion Democrat. The revenue would go to the secretary of state's office to administer the special plates program and to help military families who have lost loved ones.

## **Driving safety**

Rep. John D'Amico, a Chicago Democrat, is sponsoring two measures to limit the use of cell phones while driving, other than during emergencies.

**HB 71** Drivers would be banned from sending or reading text messages while behind the wheel.

**HB 72** Drivers would be banned from using cell phones while driving on school grounds or through construction zones.

Sen. Pamela Althoff, a McHenry Republican, introduced similar bills.

## **Business tax credit**

**SB 45** One way to generate more money for public education is proposed by Sen. James Meeks, a Chicago Democrat. He would end a tax credit for retailers, who currently collect 1.75 percent of the revenue generated by the state sales tax, which serves as compensation for administering the tax for the Illinois Department of Revenue.

Hilary Russell and Jamey Dunn



## A year for reform

Photograph by Hilary Russell

As a direct response to the impeachment and removal of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, Gov. Pat Quinn and legislative leaders are prioritizing ethics reforms this spring.

By mid-April, an executive panel appointed by Quinn is expected to publish recommendations for ways to reform everything from how Illinois politicians fund their campaigns to the way the state enters contracts with businesses.

Upon becoming governor, Quinn established the commission as a public body, subject to open meetings and public access laws. The panel's first recommendation was to improve transparency in all state agencies, boards and commissions under the governor.

Senate President John Cullerton and House Speaker Michael Madigan also signaled support by forming a joint legislative panel to consider the ideas.

Madigan said in a statement that while most of Blagojevich's alleged political activities were illegal under existing law, the state could "still improve oversight and disclosure requirements to increase transparency and permit citizens, watchdog groups and the press to better monitor government operations."

Quinn's 15-member Illinois Reform Commission, led by former federal prosecutor Patrick Collins, is designed to be independent and apolitical. Collins headed the Operation Safe Road investigation that led to the criminal conviction and prison sentence of former Gov. George Ryan.

"After 12 years as a federal prosecutor working public corruption cases, I saw firsthand how a culture of corruption has seeped into our governmental institutions and compromised the essence of our democracy," Collins said in a prepared statement.

In addition to transparency improvements, the panels also could consider the following:

- Tighten rules for state contracting.
- Revamp the way Illinois redraws



Gov. Pat Quinn speaks to reporters about a panel he created that is expected to give recommendations on ethics reforms in April.

legislative districts so it is not controlled by one political party.

- Enhance the enforcement of a 1991 Quinn initiative that protects people who expose government corruption or waste.
- Allow voters to recall elected officials.
- Require politicians to immediately disclose large campaign contributions rather than report them twice a year.

Perhaps a more controversial idea includes limiting the amount individuals and businesses could donate to political campaigns. Illinois imposes no so-called contribution limits. One proposal already being considered by the legislature would resemble federal law and would limit individual donations to \$2,300 and business donations to \$5,000 per election cycle.

Blagojevich collected numerous \$25,000 donations from businesses that held sizable state contracts.

Quinn also proposes moving the state's primary election date from February to September.

"This should be a year of reform, a year of governance," he said on his first full day as governor. "We don't need perpetual campaigns and perpetual fundraising in Illinois."

Duane Noland of Blue Mound, a former state lawmaker and member of the reform commission, says the state needs to strike while the public is outraged that Illinois became a national embarrassment. At the same time, he says, the question is, "Will the public keep the pressure on and let elected officials know this is really an issue and to give it more than lip service?"

Bethany Jaeger

For more news see the Illinois Issues Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>



## Pioneer town site named a U.S. historic landmark

The first town in the nation known to have been platted and legally registered by a black man has been named a National Historic Landmark. New Philadelphia in Pike County was founded in 1836 by Free Frank McWorter, a former Kentucky slave, and it grew as a racially integrated community.

The New Philadelphia town site was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. With landmark status, awarded in January, it is one step closer to being a place that will draw tourists to the western Illinois prairie.

"It recognizes the site as having exceptional value to the history and heritage of the United States," says Christopher Fennell, an archaeologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "It is the highest designation the federal government gives to properties like this."

About 85,000 properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but fewer than 2,500 reach National Historic Landmark status, says Fennell, who is the principal investigator for an ongoing dig on the 42-acre site near Barry, about 85 miles northeast of St. Louis. He and his students have two more years of excavation funded by a National Science Foundation grant.

Over the past five years, excavations have unearthed more than 85,000 artifacts

and the remains of 14 buildings in New Philadelphia. Initiated by the University of Illinois at Springfield and the nonprofit New Philadelphia Association in 2002, the project has also been joined by researchers from the Illinois State Museum, the University of Maryland and DePaul University.

Now farmland, the town site at its height was home to 160 people. Census data show two-thirds were white and one-third were black. Fennell says the archaeological research shows no signs of racial violence, despite the tensions of the time. The town was just 25 miles east of a slave-trading market in Hannibal, Mo., and New Philadelphia was a stop on the Underground Railroad, which could have made it a target of pro-slavery forces in southern Illinois. Yet the record shows a community living in peace and harmony for decades, until it finally faded away after the railroad bypassed it in 1869.

That story alone makes it a historic place, but the unusual courage and strength of the McWorter family adds another dimension to the significance of the landmark status. Free Frank, who took that name upon gaining freedom, was allowed to earn money "on his own time" in Kentucky. He first bought his wife's freedom so no more of their children would be born into slavery. As a landowner in Pike County, he was able to avoid Illinois' so-called black laws that

required former slaves to post a \$1,000 bond before they could live in the state. The town site eventually provided enough income for McWorter to buy all his children and other family members, 16 in all, out of slavery.

The federal landmark designation is important because understanding McWorter's story can lead to a better understanding of ourselves and our country, says Abdul Alkalimat, a U of I African-American studies professor and a descendant of McWorter.

"If New Philadelphia is possible 20 miles from slavery, that shows the democratic importance of black power," he says. "Here's a black man who owned a town, ran a town — and he and his sons also had guns — so we can begin to understand this ability to appropriate freedom and maintain it, even that close to slavery."

The federal designation does not come with federal funding, but Fennell says it should help nonprofit organizations attract funding for future projects. Alkalimat says in this economic climate a New Salem-type of re-enactment community is probably not possible, but a cultural heritage project is in the planning stages.

"I am very glad that what has been a family story is now part of the broader story that can be part of transforming our thinking."

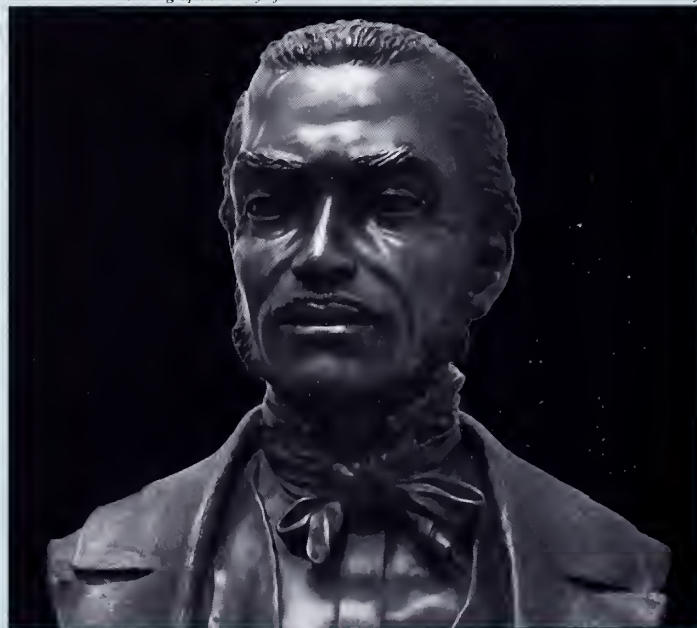
Beverley Scobell

Map courtesy of Illinois Historical Survey Collections, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



This drawing from the 1872 Atlas Map of Pike County shows a map of New Philadelphia's lots and streets, which depicts lot designations in a manner consistent with the original plat laid out by Free Frank McWorter in 1836.

Photograph courtesy of Sandra McWorter and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library



Free Frank McWorter, founder of New Philadelphia, Illinois. Sculpture by Shirley McWorter Moss on display at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield.





Chris Fennell, left, works with National Science Foundation field school participants Adeola Adegbola, Hillary Livingston and other team members in excavating an 1850s house site in New Philadelphia.

## Diversity program remains in limbo

Advocates of an effort to diversify Illinois higher education faculty and staff seek to validate a program in hopes of receiving continued state funding. Meanwhile, critics say the program isn't diverse enough.

The future of the Diversifying Faculty in Illinois initiative is uncertain.

The program gives financial assistance to minority graduate students who plan to work in education in Illinois, but funding was cut last summer when then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich slashed the state operating budget. Students responded by holding rallies, writing letters and coming to Springfield to protest. Some schools decided to foot the bill out of their own budgets until the funding was restored in November.

Students who land the fellowships must work in education in Illinois for as many years as they receive financial assistance, or they have to pay back 20 percent of the amount they receive. They can take teaching or nonteaching positions, often research jobs, at any Illinois college or university. They also can work in administrative positions.

Mike Lawrence, former executive director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, says that such scholarship and grant programs are needed to ensure that so-called traditionally under-represented groups have opportunities in higher education. "I don't think you get diversity without some fairly aggressive efforts. It just doesn't happen in the normal course of things. There has to be a special commitment to have diversity."

But Jonathan Bean, a history professor at SIUC, disagrees. "The program admission requirements make a mockery of merit," he says.

Bean adds that the grade-point average requirement, 2.75 on a scale of 4.0 for undergraduate applicants, represents average performance and should be higher. Bean also says that he thinks the program only focuses on race and fails to consider other forms of diversity, including varied opinions and research ideas.

Some students in the program are focusing their research efforts on why the program is needed. For instance, Ishwanzya Rivers at the University of

Illinois at Urbana-Champaign created a group on the social networking Web site Facebook to organize students in support of budget restorations for the program. Rickey Orr, a doctoral candidate at Illinois State University in Normal, is conducting his research on the impact of the diversity program.

"The Illinois Board of Higher Education is about evidence-based programs, and if they can't see an immediate return on their money, they will act quickly to cut programs," Rivers says.

Terry Nunn, deputy director for diversity outreach for the Board of Higher Education, says the program has already begun its application process for the 2009-2010 school year in anticipation that it will receive support from lawmakers this spring. Nunn says 22 percent of those who graduated in fiscal year 2007 had found positions in education in Illinois by the end of that fiscal year.

Nunn says data showing the number of graduates placed in higher education positions through the program has not yet been compiled for 2008 because of the uncertainty of state funding.

Jamey Dunn



## Fuller exhibit to open this month

Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art will present *Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe*, an exhibit dedicated to the innovative mind and work of Buckminster Fuller, an Illinois professor, architect, engineer and advocate of alternative energy, from March 14 to July 21.

Organized in conjunction with the Whitney Museum of American Art and the cooperation of the Fuller family, the exhibit features some of Fuller's most pivotal works.

"Buckminster Fuller spent so much time in Chicago, and many artists look to him as a touchstone and inspiration for today," says Tricia Van Eck, the Museum of Contemporary Art's curatorial coordinator and curator of artists' books. "He was such a revolutionary and comprehensive thinker."

Fuller, who lived from 1895 to 1983, thrived on expressing philosophical ideas through artistic models and designs. He was the creator of the geodesic dome, which was constructed of interlocking polygons. The geodesic dome represented what Fuller believed was a stable building structure capable of housing and sheltering humans, but one that used fewer environmental resources. Since its inception in the late 1940s, the geodesic dome has been employed by the U.S. Army, and many have been erected around the world.

Many of Fuller's theories and ideas, like the geodesic dome, integrated several different fields, including mathematics, engineering, environmental science, architecture and the visual arts. A teacher and lecturer at many universities, including Southern Illinois University Carbondale and Chicago's Institute of Design, Fuller worked with students to put his environmental and philosophical theories into action, whether it was through creating a sustainable home or researching global allocations of resources.

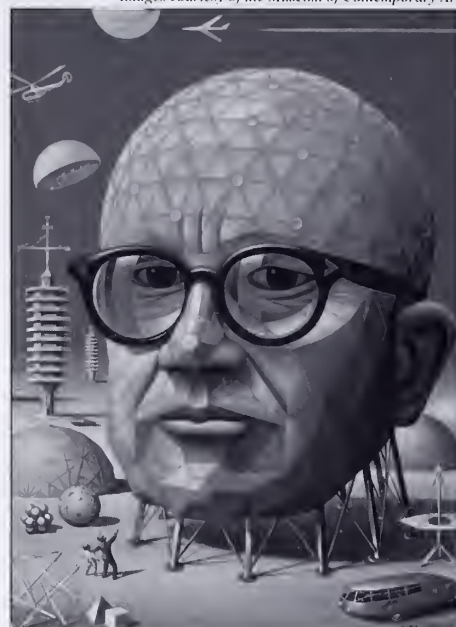
The Buckminster Fuller exhibit includes originals of Fuller's work from both his private and public collections, among them geodesic study models from his time at SIUC, and various sketches, photographs and notebooks. A traveling exhibit, the show originally began in New York City last June at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

"The Chicago pieces of the exhibit total about eight pieces and are a small addition to the New York show," Van Eck says, "but the Chicago connections are more personal," comprising personal letters, photos and documents.

Nicole Harbour



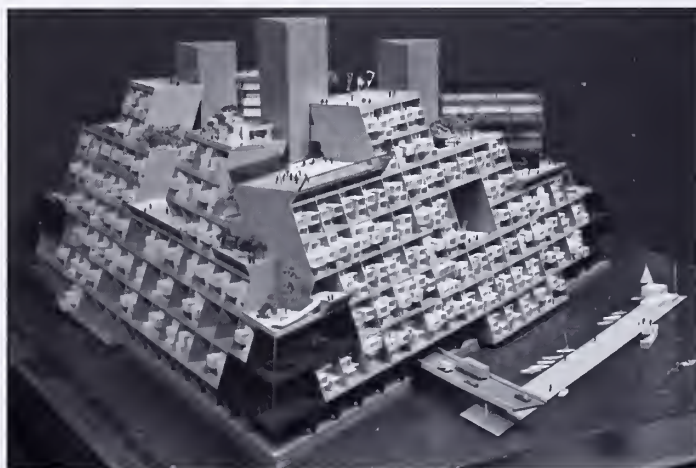
*Buckminster Fuller, Icosadodecahedron with Compound Octahedron Inscribed, c. 1960-63. Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Image courtesy of the Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, SIUC. Photograph by Leah Broadbuss. Courtesy of the Estate of R. Buckminster Fuller.*



*Boris Artzybasheff, R. Buckminster Fuller, 1963. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of Time magazine.*



*Buckminster Fuller, U.S. Pavilion Montreal Expo 67, 1967. Image courtesy of the Estate of R. Buckminster Fuller.*



*Buckminster Fuller, Model of Triton City, 1967. National Archives and Records Administration, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. Photograph © Bob Daemurich.*



## School business

Many Illinois schools are giving a new meaning to "getting down to business" as they try to meet federal standards set by the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act. They're seeking help from consulting firms that borrow from corporate philosophy.

The HOPE Foundation, based in Bloomington, Ind., is one of many firms that offer such options as seminars, literature and an intensive three-year overhaul plan. HOPE's "Failure Is Not an Option" program adapts business tactics to education and has six principles for educators to follow. The focus is on teamwork and making decisions based on test scores. Nancy Shin, executive director of HOPE, says her organization shows teachers how to address problems by "looking at data and not just trading opinions."

Teachers are learning about collaboration and preparing themselves and their students for change by reading books such as the business motivational favorite, *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson. Shin says that educators can learn about leadership and collaboration from the business world.

No Child Left Behind requires that a certain number of students reach standards for each grade level. If enough meet the needed test scores, then the school has reached its so-called adequate yearly progress. The number of students that have to make the grade increases every year, and all children have to meet the standards by 2014. If schools repeatedly fail to make yearly progress, they have to divert money to tutoring programs or send kids to other schools. When schools lose students, they also lose funding.

Roosevelt Magnet School, a fine-arts school in Peoria, uses HOPE's three-year reform plan, applying business principles with a twist, to help struggling students. For example, if some of the children have trouble with geometry, the art teacher might use M.C. Escher, an artist who used math to create his work, to teach relevant terms and concepts. Students at Roosevelt have to keep their grades up and meet testing goals if they want to participate in such performances as plays and dance

recitals. Assistant principal Jacqueline Nieukirk says that being able to perform is a good motivator. "That's a big carrot we can hang in front of the kids."

With a new president in the White House, the future of No Child Left Behind is uncertain. Nieukirk says she would like to see the elimination of part of the program that requires children with disabilities or language barriers to meet the same testing standards as all other students. On the other hand, the testing standards have caused schools to seek a variety of ways to reach typically underachieving children. The business strategies, then, serve as one method to set measurable goals, even if the goal is to meet one-size-fits-all standards.

Jamey Dunn

## News note

A state appeals court ruled that former Gov. George Ryan may keep the part of his pension not involved with his roles as governor and secretary of state. Ryan's pension was estimated at \$65,000 a year. Attorney General Lisa Madigan promised to appeal.

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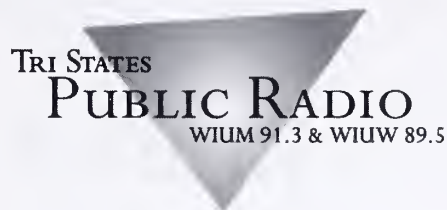
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# Brain drain or political gain?

The congressional delegation lost some clout, but having a president from Illinois should more than make up for it

by Daniel C. Vock

While Illinoisans revel in the fact that one of their own now sits in the White House, Barack Obama's presidency has sapped the star power of the state's congressional delegation, which already had lost key members in recent years.

Gone in the last five years are the influential figures of Dennis Hastert (speaker of the U.S. House), Henry Hyde (chairman of the House Judiciary and International Relations committees), Bill Lipinski (an architect of the latest highway bill), Ray LaHood (a well-connected insider even before he joined the House) and Rahm Emanuel (a White House veteran and Democratic House leader).

Not to mention Obama himself.

The Congress that Obama must work with includes 21 Illinoisans, tied for the fifth-largest state delegation with Pennsylvania.

But of those 21 Illinoisans, nine were first elected since 2004. U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin is the only Illinoisan in leadership, where he holds the No. 2 post in the Senate. No Illinoisans chair a standing committee in either chamber.

Observers say having Obama in the Oval Office — where he will be working with Illinoisans both at the White House and in his Cabinet — more than compensates for the loss of so many heavyweights in his home state.

Emanuel left the House to serve as Obama's chief of staff, the president's right-hand man in the White House. LaHood, a Peoria Republican widely respected by members of both parties,

became Obama's secretary of transportation. Arne Duncan left his post as head of the Chicago Public Schools to serve as secretary of education. And Tammy Duckworth, Illinois' director of Veterans' Affairs, was tapped to take the No. 2 job in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"They're Illinoisans. They know our problems. You don't have to do a public relations effort to acquaint them with the problems the state has," says U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, a Republican from Rockford.

When Obama met with House Republicans in January to promote his economic stimulus package, the president asked Manzullo about his district, which he has toured with Manzullo. "He knows the area I represent," Manzullo says.

U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello, a Democrat from Belleville, agrees. The current members of the Illinois delegation likely will have good access to Obama and Emanuel, who were both former congressional colleagues, he adds.

On Inauguration Day, one of Obama's first tasks was to call members of the Illinois National Guard in Afghanistan. During the conversation, the president remarked that some of the soldiers were probably St. Louis Cardinals fans from Scott Air Force Base, which is in Illinois' St. Louis suburbs.

Costello, who lives near the air base, was delighted.

"He's the first president to my knowledge, in just making comments about our

military, to mention Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. It's because he's been there," Costello says. "He knows exactly what the mission is at that base."

After meeting with Obama about the stimulus package shortly after becoming governor, Gov. Pat Quinn, a Democrat, made clear that he didn't expect any special treatment for Illinois from the president.

"I think the president said he's not going to favor Illinois over any other state. Everybody in, nobody left out, I think is his basic philosophy. And that's mine, too," Quinn told reporters, according to The Associated Press.

**Obama entered the** Oval Office confronting a major economic crisis, one that will dominate his legislative agenda for the foreseeable future. That agenda will present Congress with many chances to pick winners and losers. The economic stimulus package likely is just the first example. Congress is due to write another highway bill this spring. Obama wants to build better schools, improve the electric grid, promote alternative energy and revamp the country's health care system.

There's plenty at stake for Illinois in each of those areas.

Plus, Illinois only gets 75 cents back in federal money for every \$1 its citizens pay in federal taxes. That means it ranks 45th among states, trailing only Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Hampshire and Nevada, according to the Tax Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based group that advocates for lower taxes and





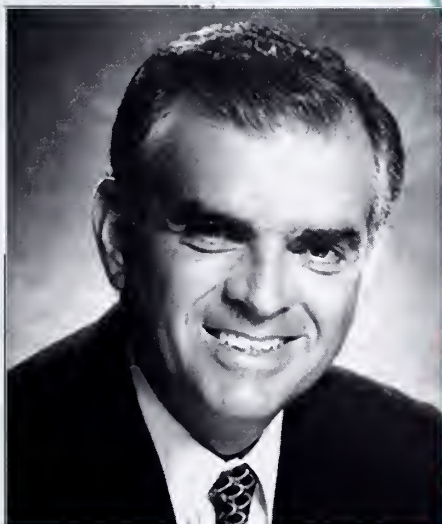
*President Barack Obama*



*Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel*



*U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan*



*U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood*



*Tammy Duckworth, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

less government spending.

But Thomas Mann, a congressional scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., cautions that Illinois' local concerns pale in comparison to the "terrifying" economic situation. He notes that Congress, as an institution, is routinely criticized for being too parochial.

"Frankly, the state's well-being has more to do with the country's recovery than it does with the change in its per-

centage of benefits [from the federal government] that go directly to the state," he says.

On the large policy questions — such as how to dispense economic stimulus funds or whether to pursue "clean coal" technology — having Illinoisans in the administration can help the Land of Lincoln, says George Washington University political science professor Christopher Deering. Other members of Congress may even

give more deference to Illinois concerns than usual because they assume the White House will be watching, he says.

Still, when it gets to nitty-gritty details of arcane legislation, such as transportation or agriculture bills, the effect likely will be minimal, Deering says.

The large size of Illinois' delegation helps increase its influence because the group can absorb the retirement of an individual lawmaker easier than in a



smaller state. Illinois also has enough members to weigh in on most policy debates through Congress' committee system, Deering adds. (Illinois may, however, lose another seat after the 2010 census.)

In the House, Illinoisans are concentrated on the Financial Services, Small Business and Transportation and Infrastructure committees. They have seats on 14 of the chamber's 20 standing committees. Some of the panels with no one from Illinois are minor committees. Others, such as the Armed Forces and Natural Resources committees, have a bigger impact on other regions.

As a party leader and a close Obama ally, Durbin is poised to weigh in on most policy decisions before the Senate. He also sits on the Appropriations, Judiciary and Rules committees. Democratic U.S. Sen. Roland Burris' committee assignments mostly deal with national security, but he has indicated he wants to focus his work on the economy.

Frank Mackaman, a staff member for the Dirksen Congressional Center in Pekin, says it's also important that the Illinois delegation is a Democratic one. Currently, 13 Democrats and seven Republicans represent Illinois, and the seat vacated by Emanuel is likely to go to the Democrats after a special election in April.

"Despite the lack of star power, the fact that it is a Democratic state and has superb connections to the administration, that's more important than the loss of the stars," Mackaman says.

***It is notoriously*** difficult to measure the relative influence of a delegation, or of any individual lawmaker, but one recent study shows how important a role Obama and Emanuel played in their respective chambers before they left.

In 2007, Illinois had the 15th most powerful delegation in Congress, according to an analysis done by Knowlegis, a Capitol Hill research service. The calculation relied on measures such as the amount of money lawmakers secured in earmarks, legislative activity and positions in their chamber.

Durbin was third among senators. Obama, despite his junior status, was ranked 11th. Emanuel was deemed the 10th most effective House member, the highest-ranking among Illinoisans. Rep. Jan

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***Having well-placed allies in the delegation helps the whole state, especially because Illinois' members of Congress emphasize working together regardless of party.***

Schakowsky, an Evanston Democrat, secured the next-highest Illinois spot, at No. 31.

Illinois certainly isn't alone in losing senior members. About 50 new members join Congress in a typical election cycle, and Costello, the Democrat who is now the dean of the Illinois delegation, says it's becoming more common for younger candidates to run for Congress and win.

Having well-placed allies in the delegation helps the whole state, especially because Illinois' members of Congress emphasize working together regardless of party.

When Manzullo first came to the House in 1993, his most pressing concern was trying to amend the Clean Air Act because it would have required residents of McHenry County to meet carpooling rules designed for more heavily populated suburban areas. But retooling the law was a potentially explosive task politically.

Manzullo says he told fellow Republican Dennis Hastert, then a member of the minority leadership, about his problem. Hastert introduced the freshman to Rep. John Dingell, the Michigan Democrat who then chaired the relevant committee, and soon Manzullo was working with Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman of California to tweak the law. Without Hastert's intervention, Manzullo says it's unlikely he would have co-sponsored his first law with a liberal California Democrat with whom he had little in common.

More recently, Durbin and Obama helped Manzullo come up with the money he requested for about 10 projects in his home district that he wanted funded in the latest transportation bill. The senators helped cover the cost of those projects

with the money each had been allotted, Manzullo recalls.

"It was astounding. It was extraordinary," he says. Manzullo says both senators trusted him to know his district's needs. That type of cooperation doesn't always happen, even in states where the senators and representatives are from the same party, Manzullo adds.

The Illinoisans in Congress are quick to tout their good working relationship. The entire delegation meets once a month to talk about their common problems, a practice former House Republican leader Bob Michel says he helped start with two Democratic senators, Paul Simon and Alan Dixon, decades ago.

Costello and Manzullo — the most senior Democrat and Republican in the delegation — co-hosted a bipartisan reception to welcome Illinois' two newest members of Congress, Republican Rep. Aaron Schock of Peoria and Democrat Debbie Halvorson of Crete.

***In the Congress*** Schock and Halvorson now enter, power doesn't depend as heavily on seniority and chairmanships as it once did.

Just before Michel entered the U.S. House in 1957, Illinois Republicans had locked up key spots. They chaired the Foreign Affairs, Judiciary and Rules committees in the House and held the House majority whip slot. Illinois' senators, Everett Dirksen, a Republican, and Paul Douglas, a Democrat, were "real powers," Michel says.

"I was just a little upstart," recalls Michel, who would go on to lead the House Republican caucus by the time he retired in 1995.

But Democrats took over the House in 1957, ousting Illinoisans from the valuable committee chairmanships. Instead, southerners dominated those positions. So when 29-year-old Dan Rostenkowski joined the House two years later, he relates now, the freshman congressman told then-Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley, "I'm a legislator, and I'm going there to win the Civil War."

He kept his word. He stayed for 35 years. Eventually, Rostenkowski became chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee before he lost his seat in the aftermath of his indictment in the House post office scandal.



"I stayed there long enough to become chairman and screw[ed] the Texans and the Californians and the New Yorkers and the Pennsylvanians, because they were getting away with murder," he says.

Rostenkowski became chairman in 1981 and served under three speakers of the U.S. House. He helped craft a fix to Social Security with President Ronald Reagan. And he watched out for the state of Illinois.

"The day we conclude politics isn't a selfish game, we've lost track. ... I was criticized a great deal because I leveraged my chairmanship, but I'll tell you one thing: Gov. [Jim] Edgar loved me, Gov. [Jim] Thompson loved me, because I solved a lot of their problems by being selfish enough to take care of Illinois," he says of the Republican governors.

Congress no longer works in the same way. The party leaders have taken on a bigger role, limiting the influence of committee chairmen. Michigan's Dingell, the 82-year-old dean of the U.S. House, was recently toppled from his post as chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee by California's Waxman because Dingell was too sympathetic to Detroit's automakers for his Democratic colleagues. While Republicans controlled the chamber, they limited chairmen to six years of running their panels (a practice the Democrats have not continued).

"It's tremendously changed since I was there," Rostenkowski reflects. The role of chairmen and individual members has been so diminished, the Chicago Democrat says he would resign rather than serve in the House today.

Committee chairs still have considerable power, but party leaders are exerting more control over them. The enthusiasm over earmarks — the pet projects put into massive budget bills by influential lawmakers — has diminished in light of several scandals, from Jack Abramoff to the so-called Bridge to Nowhere in Alaska.

Mann, the scholar from Brookings, says lawmakers willingly ceded some of their control to party leaders when the caucuses had fewer internal divisions and wanted their agendas enacted quickly. He says the process started in the 1980s and, even after some concessions by Democrats upon regaining control of

Congress two years ago, the party leaders are still firmly in control.

Mann cautions against reading too much into seniority and formal positions when determining legislators' impact.

"There are senior members who are ineffectual, and there are young members like Rahm Emanuel who hit the ground running and managed to be in top leadership ranks after a couple of terms in office," he says.

In three terms in the U.S. House, Democrat Rod Blagojevich never moved beyond backbencher status. But in his three terms, Emanuel, Blagojevich's successor, vaulted into House leadership, orchestrated a Democratic takeover of the chamber and was widely rumored to be interested in becoming speaker.

It helped that Emanuel already had star power when he got to the House. By then Emanuel was known as a veteran of both Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign and his White House staff. He was such a prominent figure, in fact, that he was the model for a central character in the TV series *West Wing*. His role organizing the Democrats' successful 2006 bid to take control of the House for the first time since 1994 only enhanced his reputation.

Likewise, Obama entered the Capitol as a celebrity, thanks to his breakout performance giving the keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. By the time he became the Senate's most junior member, a horde of reporters and fans routinely followed Obama, and he already had become a best-selling author.

Obama's Senate replacement arrived on Capitol Hill with a crowd of TV cameras in tow, too, but that owed more to the bizarre circumstances surrounding Burris' appointment than to any of Burris' accomplishments. Burris eventually became a senator through a gubernatorial appointment from Blagojevich, who had been arrested but not yet impeached or removed from office. FBI agents arrested the governor for, among other things, allegedly trying to sell the Senate seat Burris eventually filled.

The theatrics may have sullied Illinois' reputation, however fleetingly, but the state's other newcomers are learning the ropes and trying to carve out a spot in the House.

Halvorson, a Democrat from the south

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***It helped that Emanuel already had star power when he got to the House. By then Emanuel was known as a veteran of both Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign and his White House staff.***

suburbs of Chicago, notes that House Democrats had been recruiting her to run since 1999. When she finally got to Washington, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, rewarded Halvorson by placing her on a key committee that shapes the speaker's agenda and determines lawmakers' committee assignments.

"She wanted to take advantage of my leadership and my talent that I bring, not only as a [former] state legislator but [Illinois Senate] majority leader," Halvorson says. The position gives Halvorson the chance to meet House members from across the country who want to lobby for specific committee assignments.

And Republican Peter Roskam, now in his second term in the House, recently secured a spot on the Ways and Means Committee, which writes tax law. Roskam of Wheaton touted the assignment as a way to promote tax relief for his constituents.

Costello, the senior Democrat, sees plenty of room for cooperation among the Illinois delegation in the upcoming sessions, especially in causes Obama supported as a U.S. senator.

The lawmakers can work together to get money to improve roads, rail and other infrastructure for Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid. And Costello says they can try to revive FutureGen, a \$1.8 billion effort to develop technologies to burn coal with zero emissions in Mattoon, a project that the Bush administration scuttled last year.

"I only hope Illinois will do as well under President Obama as Texas did under President Bush." □

*Daniel C. Vock is a reporter for Washington, D.C.-based Stateline.org.*

# Turned away

The number of homeless youth is increasing, but services and funding haven't kept pace for years

Story and photographs by Bethany Jaeger

Quintina Honorable is 18 years old and says she's "not as homeless" as she was at age 16, but she's moved at least six times since leaving her mother's house in Springfield.

"I'm homeless, but I dress myself in a way to where I don't look that way," Honorable says. "You don't let your weaknesses define you."

She currently lives in a Springfield apartment with a few other people, but she only has half of her clothes. The rest are stored elsewhere just in case her new roommates don't work out.

"You don't know how people are, so I'm still on my tippy toes right now.

When you're out there by yourself, you find that people just use you a lot."

A previous roommate took in Honorable when she didn't have a job, but as soon as she started earning a \$100 pay-check every two weeks as a home health aide, the roommate wanted half of Honorable's check and her public aid card that helps buy groceries. That left about \$50. "I may not have had any money to pay for bills, but at least everybody was eating."

Honorable is considered one of at least 25,000 "unaccompanied youth" in Illinois, according to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. That means she is

younger than 24 and lives without a parent or guardian and lacks a stable living environment. Under state and federal law, she has legal rights to attend her school of choice, in this case, Springfield High School. She also has a so-called homeless liaison, Darla Haley, who is a full-time district employee focused on connecting homeless students within Springfield Public School District 186 to services.

Haley also helps ensure that students know they qualify for waived school fees, school supplies and public transportation. The waivers were established by federal law, the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act of 1987.



Brandie Moser watches for a school bus to pull up to the homeless shelter to drop off her 5-year-old daughter.



Moser gets her daughter, Christiana Glover, from the school bus, which stops at the homeless shelter within Contact Ministries in Springfield.



That law, as well as a 1994 state law, have improved awareness, contributing to the number of students identified as homeless. But service providers and school officials throughout Illinois also say the economic recession has displaced more students from their homes. Programs — from housing to job training — already are at full capacity and underfunded, even without widespread economic crisis. Service providers and state officials anticipate having to turn more youth away.

Even without a depressed economy, the number of beds designated for homeless youth falls far short of the demand. In 2007, the Illinois Department of Human Services funded about 318 beds specifically for homeless youth throughout the state, according to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

The Illinois Department of Human Services is seeing an increase in homeless youth cases, says Karrie Rueter, bureau chief for Youth Services and Delinquency Prevention. But it's difficult to determine because the limited number of programs the agency operates are always full.

"So we don't necessarily see that we are serving more kids because we have a number of sites that are constantly having to turn kids away because there's not space."

Mary O'Brien, homeless youth program coordinator for the agency's Divi-

sion of Community Health Prevention, says in fiscal year 2008, which ended last June 30, the state agency enrolled 583 new children into different kinds of homeless programs. They include emergency shelters, where kids spend up to a couple of weeks, and transitional housing for women, who typically can spend up to two years in the programs. But those numbers only reflect new enrollments, not youths already in the system.

Last fiscal year, O'Brien says, state services turned away about 200 boys and about 1,300 girls.

Other nonprofit and private organizations also provide shelters for youth and families with children, but a 2007 report by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless pegs the number of youth turned away from a variety of services at more than 3,000.

Daria Mueller, senior policy analyst for the coalition, doesn't mince words about total capacity. "Services are completely incapable of keeping up with the demand."

The students who do make it into programs, whether state-subsidized or privately funded, often are introduced to a whole new set of support services.

Rueter says that's why the department funds outreach and not just the other programs because when children end up in the streets, "that doesn't mean they know what to do."

Some children run away from home,

while others are abandoned or neglected. Many have been affected by physical abuse, substance abuse or mental illness, if not all three. Pregnant and parenting teens and youth with disabilities are the most likely to be underserved, according to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

One place the federal law tries to remove such barriers is in school. Yet, some school officials still have a hard time fighting the impulse to tell students they can't enroll in their school because they live outside the boundaries. Sleeping on a friend's or relative's couch, regardless of the address, is considered homeless and, therefore, makes students eligible to enroll at the school they originally attended.

Homeless liaisons train teachers, administrators and even janitors to look for signs of homelessness. And secretaries who enroll students are trained to register first, ask questions later, says Larry McVey, managing principal of programs funded by federal funds for Springfield Public School District 186.

"Are we perfect at it? No, but I think we're really getting a lot better at it," he says.

Chicago Public Schools now has a homeless liaison in every school. The district anticipates having 12,000 homeless students enrolled by the end of the year. That's 2,000 more than last year.

Detecting them can be difficult.



*Veronica Usoroh, left, talks with her daughter, April Byrd, at the dinuer table in Contact Ministries' homeless shelter in Springfield.*



*Kameron Shiflett kisses his baby brother, Robert. They're staying at the homeless shelter with their mother after their home was condemned.*



"Some people may not realize they're seen as homeless, and other people may not just want to be sort of 'outed' as being homeless in the school because there are incidents of discrimination against the children," says Kari Mills, shelter coordinator for Chicago Public Schools' Homeless Education Program.

"If you're not enrolled in the program, we can't get funding for you."

Mills works one-on-one with children in numerous homeless shelters, which is rare but highly recommended by researchers.

With most programming dedicated to helping parents get jobs or find housing, Mills says children are left to their own devices. "And the problem with that is that studies show time and time again that the children that go into homeless shelters, the academic level drops drastically."

A 2008 study conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, for instance, focused on Chicago Public Schools and monitored students enrolled in one of the city's largest service providers, Inner Voice. Sixty percent of the children identified in the survey were diagnosed with a learning disability or an emotional or behavioral disorder. Fourteen percent of the 223 children enrolled in Chicago's public high schools as of June 2007 dropped out.

Mills, who works with Great Hope in

Chicago's Little Village neighborhood, provides after-school tutoring programs in seven shelters about two days a week, focusing on reading, math and arts or other forms of enrichment. Mills says it's a way to make youths feel safe and to bring one-on-one attention to the children's home, however temporary that might be.

"It's a shock from being in a home, being housed, having friends, having their own rooms, and then having a situation where there's not much privacy," Mills says. "You're sort of bunked up with 15, 30 other families."

The goal is to expand the program from seven shelters to about 40, provided she has enough staff and funding.

**The increase** in homeless youth isn't restricted to Chicago or other urban areas.

"It's not just that we can't meet the demand in the places where we have programs," says Rueter of the Illinois Department of Human Services. "We have a large portion of the state of Illinois that does not *have* programs and services for kids outside of what's now available through the school system, which is only limited."

The department funds three transitional housing shelters and one emergency shelter in central Illinois. Between Springfield and the southern tip of the state, the agency funds only one transitional living center, which is in Jackson County. Outreach services are limited to

counties surrounding Cook.

In Granite City in western Illinois' Madison County, the majority of the surrounding area is rural. "So you may not find children living in an abandoned building," says Lynn Jarman, director of youth and family counseling at Children's Home + Aid.

She says the decrease in state funding for mental health services and substance abuse programs also contributes to homelessness.

"Caseloads are incredibly high. And people that are more apt to be homeless are more apt to have mental illness or drug and alcohol abuse."

In Springfield, one shelter had about 30 requests from families in early October. That included a total of nearly 80 children, says Bill Kienzle, executive director of Contact Ministries, which offers emergency shelter to women with children for about 90 to 120 days.

He says nearly two-thirds of the families seek emergency shelter strictly for economic reasons, while about one-fourth of the families are "overflow" from a local shelter for domestic violence victims.

One 15-year-old staying at the shelter is April Byrd, who moved with her mother and sister from St. Louis to Springfield so her mother could recover from an abusive relationship and from substance abuse. Five of her siblings remain out of state.

"I just wanted to live with my mom,"



*Christiana Glover gets an after-school snack in her bedroom at Contact Ministries.*



*Christiana sits on the lap of her mother, Brandie Moser, at Contact Ministries.*



April says after school one day, eating dinner with her mother at Contact Ministries' emergency shelter. They pray every night, often together. "I pray that my mom gets the house and the car that she wants because she deserves it. She works hard every day."

Her mother, Veronica Usoroh, is applying for public housing, food stamps and jobs that pay better than her current position at a Hardee's fast food restaurant.

Kienzle says the shelter focuses on helping children, even if it's as small as throwing a surprise birthday party. "We have an opportunity to have a profound impact on a child's life, and through that, our best chance of breaking the chain of homelessness in that family."

During the past two years, more than 2,600 families who came through the shelter were first-time clients and were often considered "working poor," Kienzle says. Last year, the agency also handed out about \$100,000 in food vouchers for about 5,300 families.

"We're here to help people in their time of need, but we do need more resources and more financial support to be able to meet the increased demand that comes from these economic times."

The agency gets about 20 percent of its funding from the state and more than 50 percent from churches and private donors.

State funding for homeless youth ser-

vices totaled \$4.7 million last fiscal year, but some grant amounts are slowly decreasing. State payments to service providers also have been significantly delayed as the backlog of all bills exceeds \$4 billion. Gov. Pat Quinn has said timely state payments are a priority this year.

Former Gov. Rod Blagojevich did propose to increase the amount of money dedicated to homeless youth services last spring, but the funding was cut later in the year.

"We have times when it looks really good, like we're going to get extra money, and it gets to the end and they scratch it right off," says O'Brien, the Department of Human Services' homeless youth program coordinator.

The push for extra money by advocates is not just to increase the number of beds available. Rueter says service providers also need more support in offering educational services, job training and transitional jobs.

The No. 1 reason teens seek an extension in homeless programs is because they can't make enough money or advance at their current jobs, according to O'Brien.

"I think if they had some real serious programs, it would not only help kids stay off the streets and quit being homeless — the revolving door syndrome — but it would actually open other beds for kids who haven't been in them yet. That would be very helpful."

In fact, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless' 2007 survey found that employment was one of the greatest unmet needs of homeless youth. Mueller, the senior policy analyst for the coalition, says transitional job programs offer on-the-job training for youth, and their wages are subsidized by the government, much like a paid internship. At the end of the internship, participating businesses can decide to hire the youth on unsubsidized wages.

Some nonprofit groups are trying out new models such as housing their own businesses in which homeless youth can work, for instance, making candles.

"There's all these ready-to-go projects that are really great, and they just need to get funded," Mueller says.

She adds that funding such programs can help the youths build resumes, confidence and self-sufficient lifestyles. That would decrease the government's cost for youths who rely on social services, emergency room care or end up in correctional facilities. But policymakers, while sympathetic to the issue, tend not to see their return on investment, Mueller says.

"It's almost crude to talk about it in that way, in terms of money, but some people need to hear that because otherwise, they're just not motivated enough to do something about this issue. I mean, this is really about saving lives." □



*Jennifer Shiflett and her son Kameron are staying at the emergency homeless shelter after their home was condemned.*



*Anthony Cropp of Springfield plays Nintendo DS, running his own country, "Antonopia," from his room at Contact Ministries.*

# Always in the running

All eyes are on U.S. Sen. Roland Burris to see what he brings to the table and whether he'll run in 2010

by Jamey Dunn

From age 16 to 71, one thing has remained constant about Roland Burris: his ambition to hold high political office.

As a sophomore in high school, Burris set two life goals, one to become a lawyer and one to hold a statewide office. He now serves in a position that typically

is filled through a statewide election, but Burris' ascension to the U.S. Senate was anything but typical.

He was appointed by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who has since been impeached and removed from office for, among other things, allegations that he tried to sell the Senate seat for campaign contributions or personal gain. The ensuing media frenzy put every aspect of Burris' appointment under scrutiny. The controversy grew cloudier more than a month after Blagojevich was removed from office, when Burris submitted an affidavit to a special House impeachment committee that added new details about his appointment.

In January, Burris testified to the committee that he spoke with Lon Monk, a close friend of Blagojevich, about his interest in the U.S. Senate seat. In a second affidavit, submitted February 4, he said that Rob Blagojevich, the governor's brother, called him three times

soliciting fundraising help. Burris said in his affidavit that he did not give any money or assistance because "it could be viewed as an attempt to curry favor with him regarding his decision to appoint a successor to President Obama." Burris added that he discussed his interest in the Senate seat with at least three other Blagojevich insiders — Doug Scofield, John Harris and John Wyma — between June and the November election.

As of press time, the revelation of those conversations sparked Republican outrage and plans to seek an investigation into perjury or, at least, to reconvene the special House impeachment committee.

Now that Burris is the only African-American member of the U.S. Senate and holds the seat that launched Barack Obama to the presidency, all Illinoisans' eyes are watching to see how his term will unfold and whether he'll embark on the 12th campaign of his career in 2010.

The top challenge Burris faces this spring is the national financial crisis and the president's economic stimulus plan. Burris, a self-described "old banker," says he wants the plan to have strict accountability because the nation wasted money in Iraq by not keeping track of where the cash was going. He also says

*U.S. Sen. Roland Burris testified in January before the Illinois House impeachment committee — clearing one hurdle to his being seated in the Senate.*

*Photograph by Robert Pope*



job creation is his No. 1 priority.

Burris' Senate committee assignments, all related to the military or national security, are unexpected, given his range of experience. "You take what they give you, and you're happy about it," he says.

Burris holds the distinction of being the first African-American elected to a statewide office in Illinois, as comptroller in 1978. He held that position until 1991 and then served as state attorney general from 1991 to 1995.

As a senator, he serves on the Armed Services Committee and replaces Obama on two panels, the Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committees. Burris notes that he stays well informed on foreign policy issues, and he credits his year as an exchange student from Southern Illinois University Carbondale to the University of Hamburg in Germany as giving him some global perspective.

He warns, however, that he is not a guaranteed vote for the Democrats, even though he agrees with Obama on most issues.

"I will support the president when I think he is right, and I will push my agenda when I think it is right," Burris says, not referring to a 2010 race.

His first speech on the Senate floor was to endorse Eric Holder, Obama's pick for attorney general. Burris recited a well-known anecdote from his childhood, when he and his father headed an effort to integrate the public pool in his hometown of Centralia.

A black lawyer had been hired to come from St. Louis to help, but the lawyer never came. Burris' father, Earl Lee Burris, was disappointed and said that if African-Americans were going to make progress, they needed leaders who were "responsible and responsive."

Burris says that experience sparked his political aspirations.

He also learned at an early age about handling defeat, after his father lost a local race for precinct committeeman.

Burris has been accused of being highly ambitious and having a healthy ego throughout his career. He often is asked about his mausoleum, which already has his résumé and the words "TRAIL BLAZER" carved on it. He told Illinois Statehouse reporters that he has been a probate attorney who guided other

people in preparing for the end of life, so he should be prepared, too.

His public statements that divine intervention played a role in Blagojevich's choosing him as a U.S. senator, as well as his public comments that he should be partially credited for Obama's presidential election, drew criticism.

At a Rainbow PUSH Coalition breakfast in January, Burris said, "If there was no Martin Luther King Jr. and no Roland Burris, there would be no Barack Obama in the White House today." Burris later said he meant that when he became the first African-American elected to a statewide office three decades ago, he paved the way for other African-Americans to hold public offices.

Critics say his ambition also affected his job performance.

Mike Lawrence, former press secretary for then-Gov. Jim Edgar, says Burris was a good comptroller, but he did not seem to have the same enthusiasm for the office of attorney general. Rather, Lawrence says, Burris, who was attorney general during Edgar's Republican administration, may have treated the position as a steppingstone for his 1994 gubernatorial run, the first of three bids for governor.

A former assistant attorney general to Burris was Mary Brigid Hayes, who resigned in protest rather than try a case that caused controversy within the office. She says Burris refused to speak to her when she attempted to bring to his attention several mistakes a prosecutor had made in a capital punishment case. Hayes acknowledges she originally took the job in Burris' office, in part, because of her own ambition to try a case before the Illinois Supreme Court. But she says it was Burris' desire to become governor that made him ignore her suspicion that an innocent man might be on Death Row.

The defendant in that case, Rolando Cruz, later was exonerated by DNA evidence, which helped to prompt former Gov. George Ryan to institute a moratorium on the death penalty and call for reforms to the system.

Hayes says she thinks Burris ignored her for political reasons because freeing a man from Death Row might have seemed as if he wasn't "tough on crime." She even wrote an opinion piece for the *Chicago Tribune* after Burris was

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***Burris has been accused of being highly ambitious and having a healthy ego throughout his career. He often is asked about his mausoleum, which already has his résumé and the words "TRAIL BLAZER" carved on it. He told Illinois Statehouse reporters that he has been a probate attorney who guided other people in preparing for the end of life, so he should be prepared, too.***

appointed U.S. senator. "I don't think it is fair at all to say that Burris' career has been without controversy," she says.

The Cruz case was not the only part of Burris' past that has been revisited since his appointment. A \$1.2 million loan to Burris' 2002 gubernatorial campaign fund from Telephone USA, a company run by his friend Joseph Stroud, caused some controversy when Burris testified to the Illinois House Special Investigative Committee that recommended Blagojevich's impeachment in January.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Burris testified in court that the \$1.2 million had nothing to do with his later attempt to use his influence with authorities to help Stroud in a dispute with a former employee. Stroud said he supported Burris because it was good for the African-American community.

Two years before his U.S. Senate appointment, Burris himself donated \$4,500 to Blagojevich's re-election cam-

paigned in 2006. Kent Redfield, a political scientist at the University of Illinois at Springfield, says lobbyists, such as Burris, were at the time, tend to donate to political campaigns hoping to gain access to the governor. However, he says, Burris should have considered "all the bad things that were both alleged and known about the governor at the time."

But Burris did not let Blagojevich's alleged unethical and illegal behavior stop him from accepting the former governor's offer to fill Obama's U.S. Senate seat. The appointment attracted international media attention and raised the question why Burris would accept an office handed to him by a governor teetering on the brink of impeachment. Burris testified before the special Illinois House committee that he has not engaged in any so-called pay-to-play politics, particularly with Blagojevich.

Yet, the U.S. Senate Democrats initially refused to seat Burris because his appointment was tainted by the accusations against Blagojevich, and Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White refused to sign the paperwork that made the appointment official. When Burris first went to Washington to take the oath of office, he was escorted out of the Senate chamber. After the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that Burris' appointment was legal and that the Illinois secretary of state had fulfilled his duties simply by registering the appointment, Burris officially was sworn in and seated on January 15.

The temporary chief of staff for Burris' transition team, Fred Lebed, who also is a longtime friend and former lobbying partner, says that once Burris decided to take the appointment, they never looked back.

"Time was on our side, and the law was on our side," he says. Burris remained on message and waited out the vocal critics.

If Burris is one thing, he is persistent. He has run 11 times for various political positions, including three bids as governor, the last of which ended in a loss to Blagojevich during the 2002 Democratic primary.

In fact, Burris never made it out of a Democratic primary for governor or for U.S. senator. He ran as an independent when he challenged Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and lost in 1995.

Dawn Clark Netsch, who came from behind to defeat Burris in the 1994 Democratic gubernatorial primary, says Burris didn't bring enough policy to the table. He "had no substantive contributions to make to the great debate."

Burris' wins include three races for state comptroller and one for attorney general. He says the best way to prepare for a difficult campaign is to "always believe you are going to win."

Many wonder if such unbridled optimism will carry Burris into his second race for U.S. Senate. The first time, in 1984, he was beaten by then-U.S. Rep. Paul Simon in the Democratic primary.

Redfield says that even if a small number of supporters encourage Burris to run in two years, he's likely to do so. "If two people tell him to run, he's going to hear an army telling him to run, a national groundswell. It doesn't take much for him to hear the call of the people."

Redfield adds that he thinks Burris' chances of retaining the seat are good, but he constantly will have to combat the Blagojevich connection.

Burris also may take heat for issuing a permit as comptroller to the Illinois Funeral Directors Association, allowing it to administer a trust for preplanned

funerals. The value of the trust has been tanking, and funeral homes are suing the group for allegedly mismanaging it. State Comptroller Dan Hynes' office says the permit never should have been issued.

After leaving his job as comptroller, Burris was a lobbyist for the Illinois Funeral Directors Association.

Other challenges facing Burris include his losing record of running for public office and his weakness as a fundraiser in the past, according to Redfield.

Potential challengers include state Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias and Hynes, who would have to give up secure positions to run.

Lebed says that while he was Burris' chief of staff, he was "operating in the sense that [Burris] is running."

Lebed has handed the position of interim chief of staff over to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's chief adviser, Darrel Thompson, but says he will support Burris in his decision, whatever it is, concerning the 2010 election.

As for possible challengers, Lebed, the former Burris campaign manager, already sounds as though he is prepared for the race. "We have won some primaries and lost some. The water is warm. We welcome anyone to jump in." □

*Photograph by Bethany Jaeger*



*Roland Burris speaks to reporters in Springfield after testifying to an Illinois House committee.*



# Obama's mentor

Community organizer Jerry Kellman trained the man who would become president

by Phil Davidson

Gerald Kellman's office is in a nondescript ranch house on Chicago's northwest side, adjacent to St. Mary of the Woods Catholic Church, which owns the property.

The décor is minimalist: Master's degree diplomas in divinity and journalism, from Loyola and Northwestern universities, respectively, hang from his office's white walls. They join a framed picture of Gandhi, a *Last Supper* rendering and a poster promoting "The Still Small Voice: Jesus Encounters God and His Destiny," a 1999 sermon and discussion featuring the Rev. Leo T. Mahon, the church's pastor emeritus and an inspiration to Kellman.

As the church's adult formation director, the soft-spoken but headstrong Kellman uses the office to communicate with clergy, staff members and parishioners; leading spiritual retreats is one of his primary tasks.

But since autumn — longer than that actually, but especially since autumn — the office has seen a spike in the number of visits and phone calls from people with no ties to the parish or community.

Those people, reporters mostly, came calling and looking for Kellman to inquire about his relationship with the world's most powerful man: President Barack Obama.

So for a while there, the office doubled as a (voluntary) Obama publicity operation.

Kellman, who goes by Jerry, said recently he was spending 25 hours per week doing interviews with media outlets from



Photograph courtesy of Jerry Kellman

*Jerry Kellman hired President Barack Obama as a community organizer in Chicago.*

all over the world. That's bound to happen to the person who brought Obama to Chicago 25 years ago and hired him as a community organizer — a profound and prominent period in the president's life, which has been written about extensively.

The day after Christmas, Kellman was in his office fielding an interview with a reporter from *Libération*, a French daily newspaper, for a feature on people who influenced world leaders. Most reporters, however, just wanted him to shed some insight on his former protégé, whom he employed to help enact social justice in moribund communities on Chicago's south side and its suburbs.

Touting the virtues of an old friend and a person he thoroughly believes in to the

press wasn't much of a burden, Kellman says.

"It was a privilege to help with this campaign," says Kellman, who's working on a return to community organizing after leaving several years ago for a career in the ministry. "I wanted him to win."

**Kellman was born** in New York City in 1950 but was raised in New Rochelle, N.Y. The suburb's status as the first northern city to desegregate its schools (based on a 1962 U.S. Supreme Court case) left an indelible impression on him.

After some dalliances with activism as a high school student — he counts a ban on Little Black Sambo dolls he helped initiate in local schools as one victory — Kellman

graduated to the big leagues upon his enrollment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a progressive's Mecca.

"I went to the University of Wisconsin to major in student protesting," he says jokingly.

In Madison, he rallied students and helped put a stop to mandatory ROTC orientations, among other accomplishments. His stay was brief—he eventually transferred to Reed College in Portland, Ore.—but the Wisconsin school's proximity to Chicago provided a fatful opportunity to visit the Windy City. He stopped by in 1968 to experience the Democratic National Convention, but like many liberals who made the trip, Kellman left with a bad impression.

Despite telling himself that he'd never go back, Kellman arrived in Chicago again in 1970, this time to stay for the long haul. He began an education in community organizing at a school run by Saul Alinsky, the late Chicagoan considered by many as the modern practice's father.

Alinsky was a radical, but his method of reaching the core of people's needs and concerns through one-on-one interviews influenced many organizers, perhaps most notably Obama.

In 1988, Obama wrote an article for *Illinois Issues*, "Problems and promise in the inner city," about his experiences as an organizer in and around Chicago. In it, he describes how nowhere was the promise of organizing more apparent than in the traditional black churches. The piece later became part of the book *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*.

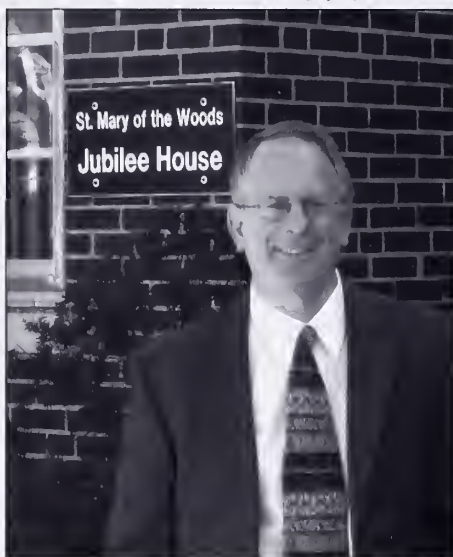
The Rev. Don Headley, a priest at St. Mary's who organized the poor in Panama for 13 years beginning in the late 1960s, has a funny story about Alinsky that speaks to the organizer's philosophy.

Sometime after he was ordained in 1958, Headley attended a meeting with Alinsky arranged by the Rev. Jack Egan, the founder of urban Catholic activism who died in 2001.

As Headley recalls it, Alinsky spoke to a room full of young priests and asked how many of them wanted to become bishops.

"About three young idiots raised their hands," Headley says. "Alinsky told them: 'Well, leave the room. You guys are going to be so eager to get to the next step ... you won't do anything today.'"

Photograph by Phil Davidson



Jerry Kellman is adult formation director at St. Mary of the Woods Catholic Church in Chicago.

"It was a wonderful, wonderful moment," Headley says.

Kellman drew a lot from Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation, including methods to analyze how power is obtained, and used this knowledge while taking on the mortgage banking industry on Chicago's west side, in addition to other endeavors.

But after a few years, the ups and downs of organizing exhausted Kellman physically and mentally.

Kellman pursued other opportunities and eventually went back to school, obtaining his journalism master's from Northwestern in 1980.

But the self-fulfillment and chance for empowerment that organizing provided was an itch that continued.

"I decided to leave organizing and then I didn't—I went back," he says.

After 18 months of public policy postgraduate studies at the University of Chicago, Kellman returned to organizing in 1982, this time on behalf of Hispanic communities. He trained staff for the United Neighborhood Organization, a city-wide, church-based effort—the Jewish-born Kellman converted to Catholicism in 1983—to give voice to a growing but underrepresented minority group.

Joshua Hoyt, executive director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, met Kellman in 1984 while both were working for UNO. Kellman, who was transitioning to a project on Chicago's south side at the time, was a valuable resource, Hoyt says.

"Kellman was the person first helping us to understand how you could do effective organizing in churches, and he came to it with the methodology of the IAF (Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation)," says Hoyt, who's been an organizer in various capacities going on 33 years.

Kellman left UNO to begin work for the Calumet Community Religious Conference, which sought the assistance of black churches on Chicago's south side to help bring about better opportunities for local residents. The region was once the largest steel-producing area in the world, but globalization was starting to change that. Through his work with the Developing Communities Project, the CCRC's inner-city operation, Kellman fought the fallout affecting workers and their families as the factories and mills began to shutter.

As the project's executive director, he thought it wise to bring in a charismatic African-American organizer to whom the ministers and residents could better relate.

Help-wanted ads were placed in newspapers across the country, including one in the *New York Times*. A 24-year-old Columbia University graduate saw it and applied.

His name was Barack Obama.

"I had all but given up on organizing when I received a call from Marty Kaufman," Obama wrote in his 1995 memoir, *Dreams from My Father*. "He offered to start me off at \$10,000 the first year, with a \$2,000 travel allowance to buy a car; the salary would go up if things worked out."

Marty Kaufman is a pseudonym for Jerry Kellman. Obama writes about him at length throughout the memoir's 160-page section on his experience organizing in Chicago. Kellman has a signed copy. It reads "To Jerry, a friend and a mentor."

Kellman, who's part of that exclusive group that can authoritatively refer to the president of the United States of America by first name, is understandably proud of much of his and Obama's accomplishments with the Developing Communities Project.

The list includes obtaining a \$1 million commitment from the state for a job-training program on the far south side, as well as working to rid housing projects of asbestos.

In *Dreams*, Obama writes of how some residents of Altgeld Gardens distrusted Kellman, however, and felt he was arrogant.



Obama's portrayal isn't always glowing, either; in one passage, Obama says Kellman made no particular attachments to people during his three years in the area. (Kellman takes no issue with any of the depictions.)

But at the same time, Obama believed Kellman was an effective and conscientious organizer.

Obama pondered those qualities as he got to know the people he was helping organize more intimately, such as when he would counsel teenagers on college applications.

"It was during such times, when familiarity or weariness dissolved the lines between organizer and leader, that I began to understand what [Kellman] had meant when he insisted that I move toward the centers of people's lives," Obama wrote.

The Developing Communities Project had an office in the rectory of Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Roseland. The Rev. Bill Stenzel, a Holy Rosary priest at the time who's now pastor at St. Bede the Venerable in Chicago, says he allowed Obama and Kellman to use the facility because he wanted to be a part of the organization, and his parish could offer the space but not the \$5,000 donation for membership.

Stenzel says Kellman was an asset adept in gathering people who cared for the community beyond the boundaries of the membership role.

"In the Roseland community, he would have encountered clergy and church folks of many varying ecclesiologies and motivations, but he could engage a conversation that stretched everyone without pushing an agenda, and folks could discover interests in common and issues in common," Stenzel wrote in an e-mail.

For his part, Obama connected well with all who worked with him, Stenzel adds.

Kellman said Obama was such a deft organizer because as an outsider himself, growing up in Hawaii and Indonesia, he could empathize with people.

"Outsiders can do two things: They can try to be like everybody else; or they can identify with other outsiders," Kellman says. "Part of what Barack learned was not to be ideological."

After three years, Obama left organizing and decided to enroll at Harvard Law School. Kellman says Obama discussed exploring elected office as a way to effect societal change because organizing often

came up short in achieving that goal.

Kellman didn't argue, thinking it was the right decision for Obama.

Working in Chicago, though, both were cynical about public officials.

"We didn't believe that anyone black could be president or anything," Kellman says.

**Like Obama, Kellman** decided he'd (again) leave organizing to pursue other channels to change people's hearts and minds.

He was drawn to the ministry.

"I felt that if attitudes didn't change, we wouldn't be able to change larger policies," he says.

In 1997, Kellman received his master's degree in divinity from Loyola University-Chicago. He started working for churches, leading retreats and preaching about changing hearts to transform society.

Kellman is no proselytizer; some of his views — on abortion in particular — are at odds with Catholic doctrine.

The Rev. Headley at St. Mary's, who believes the church is just an instrument, said Kellman is much more interested in getting people to have faith than religion.

"Jerry's very perceptive, and he's very good at what he does," Headley says. "He sees what people need and tries to fill that. He's interested in getting people to look toward the future rather than cling to the past."

Sounds a lot like organizing.

Kellman likely won't ever be able to sever his ties to the more traditional practice. Not when the man he hired and was a mentor to, whose wedding he attended, is now president of the most powerful country in the world.

Organizing is a central tenet of the Obama administration. Last month, the president established Organizing for America, a grassroots effort aimed to be an opportunity for millions of Americans to pitch in and help advance his agenda.

Kellman played no small role in promoting that idea. Through his interviews with the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Frontline* documentaries, or his televised campaign advertisement in Iowa or the speech he gave during the Democratic National Convention, Kellman was a living and breathing testament to one man's power to organize and a reason to be optimistic about its future.

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***"Outsiders can do two things: They can try to be like everybody else; or they can identify with other outsiders. Part of what Barack learned was not to be ideological."***

**—Jerry Kellman**

Repeated efforts to reach the Obama campaign team for comment regarding Kellman were unsuccessful. A person formerly affiliated with the campaign warned: "We rarely comment in stories like these."

It's pretty clear, though, that thanks to Obama, organizing is en vogue.

"In the last 30 years, community organizing has moved from something that was quite marginal and horribly paid to something that is a respected contribution to our democracy," says Hoyt of the immigrant and refugee coalition. "It's been quite effective in turning around a lot of devastated communities and training a lot of people who went on to become very important political leaders, not the least of which was Barack Obama."

Kellman is contemplating a return, exploring a project with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless addressing homelessness policy and its roots in mental illness, addiction and the prison system.

He's convinced community organizing will now be much more collaborative with the federal government but knows there's still a lot of work left in motivating people to do things differently.

"Organizing is reorganizing," Kellman says. □

*Phil Davidson is a Champaign-based freelance writer.*

# Stormy weather

Illinois has a volatile climate,  
and scientific knowledge may be the best defense

by Stanley A. Changnon

Everyone has a weather story, some worse than others, but each frightening in its own way. Sharon Grant still gets goose bumps recalling hers. As a graduate student at Eastern Illinois University in the winter of 1992, she was driving home after a night class from Charleston to Tuscola, a distance of 30 miles across the mostly treeless plains of east-central Illinois. A bad snowstorm had covered Interstate 57 with blowing snow and her car ran into a drift. Stuck, the car soon was nearly covered with snow. She waited in the relative safety of the cold car for several hours until three men stopped to help. Unable to dislodge her car, they took her to her home in Tuscola.

She was soon safe and warm, yet she says, "It was one of the worst days of my life."

Grant was fortunate. She survived her ordeal with the cost of a towing charge and some repairs to her car. But as anyone living in Illinois can attest, weather can exact severe tolls in human life and suffering, in addition to towering losses to personal property and costs for government response.

Scientific knowledge of the state's climate may be its citizens' best defense. The Illinois State Water Survey, based at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has published a compendium of Illinois weather statistics in its *Climate Atlas of Illinois*. After two centuries of noting weather conditions, Illinoisans have gathered more data about the state's climate than has been collected in any other area in the world.

Information about extremes of temperature and precipitation during the past 200 years has allowed scientists to study the potential climate changes due to global warming, a subject getting worldwide attention.

So far, the historical temperature and precipitation data do not suggest that a recent climate change has occurred in this state as a result of global warming. The research indicates that recent changes are not as great as prior shifts before humans could have altered the climate. The warmest decade in the past 200 years occurred in the 1930s and the wettest in the 1880s.

Still, the old saying in Illinois holds: If you don't like the weather, just wait a day and it will change. The state has an ever-fluctuating continental-type climate, far from any modifying influences of the oceans. The climate here on the prairie, bound by the Great Lakes and three major rivers — the Wabash, the Ohio and the Mississippi — has a wide range of seasonal conditions with hot summers and cold winters. Expected in any given year are many storms of different types, plus heat and cold waves, with a good chance for droughts or persistent heavy rains and floods, all reflecting a truly volatile climate that affects everyone, in good and bad ways, almost every day.

Government agencies at all levels — federal, state, county and municipal — administer policies to help the public recover from extreme weather, from clearing snow-covered roads to sending emergency response teams to injured motorists or homeowners to formulating policies that mitigate crop or business losses.



Recent weather patterns provide several examples.

This past winter, the Chicago area saw heavy snowfall. The cost of salt — up to \$132 a ton in some of the Chicago suburbs — stretched municipal budgets already thin from the economic downturn. According to the *Daily Herald*, in December Batavia paid out nearly \$94,000 in overtime costs — twice that paid out in December 2007 — to deal with 24 inches of snow. Naperville paid employees for 4,500 overtime hours for snow removal, at a cost of \$205,000, and Elgin paid out \$201,000.

During the winter of 2007-2008, Illinoisans experienced 14 storms, including four ice storms, the second-largest number of winter storms on record. Each of those storms required a major distribution of salt on streets and highways, and many communities ran out of salt in February, well before all the storms had occurred.

Tom Olkowski, superintendent of public works in Vernon Hills in Lake County, says his department tried to get more salt but wasn't able to find any. That resulted in numerous auto accidents.

Motorists also found themselves dodging potholes. Frequent wide temperature swings and heavy rains created major chinks in the asphalt of streets and highways throughout the state. Damages to vehicles, private and public, were widespread. Beyond government costs for road crews trying to keep up — Chicago filled 120,000 potholes from January to March last year — higher prices for oil used in the asphalt to fill the thousands of potholes added to the expense.

Jesse Walker, public works director in East St. Louis, summed it up: "Some streets may not get patched at all. It is going to get rougher and rougher out there."

Most Illinois communities exceeded their snow removal and road repair budgets by midwinter. When last year's spring finally came, Diane O'Keefe, deputy director of highways at the Illinois Department of Transportation, stated what most local governments knew: "We realized we were not going to be able to do permanent repairs with the maintenance staff because there were just too many potholes out there."

As omnipresent as potholes are, winter storms can cause a cascading effect on local and statewide economies. Two win-

ters ago, Illinois had three major snowstorms, creating property losses totaling \$1.3 billion. Retail sales decreased 50 to 60 percent in storm areas. Two February storms had major impacts on sales of new homes, which fell 27 percent. The construction industry suffered major work stoppages, and 23,000 workers temporarily lost their jobs.

A December 2006 storm caused enormous power outages across the state for many days, and costs for transportation and power repairs amounted to \$450 million. That was followed by a February storm that caused massive property damage, reaching \$560 million. Close on its heels was another snow and ice storm that brought massive damage to northern Illinois, with power and property losses totaling \$330 million.

Those storms alone led to 32 deaths, largely from vehicle accidents. But each year, the state loses an average of 114 lives because of extreme weather conditions, including 92 deaths caused by cold waves and heat waves. During the summer of 1995, the extreme heat wave in Chicago killed 753 persons. Massive summer floods in 1996 in northern Illinois caused 12 deaths, and property damages from

Rockford to Chicago totaled \$390 million.

Because Illinois is in tornado alley, the state can count on severe spring storms. The capital city was hit by back-to-back tornadoes on March 12, 2006, causing "tens of millions of dollars in damages," says Ernie Slottag, communications director for Springfield. Remarkably, no lives were lost. "We didn't even have any major injuries," he says.

But that was not the case when Illinois was a target of the most deadly single tornado in history on March 18, 1925. Moving across Missouri, Illinois and Indiana at speeds greater than 60 mph, that F5 tornado covered 219 miles and killed 695 people, nearly 600 of them in Illinois. Several southern Illinois towns were destroyed or severely damaged: Desoto, Gorham, Murphysboro, Parrish and West Frankfort. Property losses were \$10 million in Murphysboro alone.

In Illinois, the most tornadoes occur in April and May, but tornadoes have appeared in all months. Illinois has had 1,458 tornadoes since 1952, an average of 26 annually. This state ranks eighth nationally in the number of tornadoes and deaths from tornadoes. The average number of tornado deaths in Illinois is four per year,

## Climate costs

Weather	Financial losses (billions)	Deaths
1985-86 wet period	<b>3.54</b>	<b>17</b>
1988 drought	<b>4.97</b>	<b>812</b>
1990 warm & wet	<b>0.41</b>	<b>9</b>
1993 floods	<b>5.89</b>	<b>6</b>
1993-94 cold winter	<b>1.76</b>	<b>4</b>
1995 flood/heat wave	<b>1.39</b>	<b>769</b>
1997-1998 El Niño	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0</b>
1999-00 heat/drought	<b>2.47</b>	<b>127</b>
2001-02 warm winter	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0</b>
2006-07 stormy winter	<b>1.09</b>	<b>34</b>
2007-08 storms/floods	<b>2.88</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Illinois State Water Survey, data from 1984 to 2008.



*Wind-driven waves pummel the Chicago shoreline.*



*Lightning strikes in Champaign-Urbana.*

now much lower than before 1950, when forecasting and detection skills were less sophisticated. In 1953, Illinois State Water Survey scientists were the first in the nation to detect a tornado using radar.

Though certainly not comparable to a loss of life, property damages from bad weather average more than \$890 million per year. Floods and hail cause the most damage, followed by high winds and winter storms. During the drought of 2005, areas in western and northern Illinois experienced water shortages, major decreases in crop yields and high power costs totaling \$1.4 billion.

Farmers are often the hardest hit. Agriculture-related losses average \$320 million a year and range from low yields to decreased food products, little seed growth and poor sales of farm machinery.

Agriculture is the most climate sensitive among six economic-policy sectors in Illinois. Others affected by extreme weather conditions are personal property, energy, government, business and transportation. Altogether, losses in Illinois amount to more than a billion dollars a year.

But it's not all bad news. The climate does produce benefits, too. Consider, for example, the impacts of the warm, dry fall of 2008, which allowed for a desperately needed long, good harvest time after spring flooding forced a second planting in many areas of the state. Also, the pleasant conditions helped get a record number of voters out on Election Day, although having an Illinois senator on the presidential ticket certainly contributed as well.

Although no one can ever beat Mother Nature, Illinoisans may have an edge in the fight. This state now knows more about its

climate and how it affects the environment, human health and the economy than any other state in the nation. Illinois State Water Survey climatologists have digitized all state data recorded since 1956.

Illinois has a long history of climate measurements, dating back to 1820, which allow long-term research endeavors. Climate-health concerns resulting from the War of 1812 led the Army to establish a program that required staff to record daily weather measurements at all forts, which included the three in Illinois at Chicago, Peoria and Rock Island. Then, in 1840, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., launched a national network of climate-measuring stations and installed 16 in Illinois, each measuring daily temperatures and precipitation.

After the Civil War, which revealed the huge importance of climate information, the Army took over the Smithsonian network and installed more stations. Illinois had 26 stations by 1870. Agricultural interests pressured for more stations and a shift of the national network, then the Weather Bureau, to the new U.S. Department of Agriculture. That move occurred in 1891 and led to establishment of 59 climate stations in Illinois by 1900. Some included measurements of soil temperature and moisture. Subsequent efforts led to at least one station in each of the state's 102 counties by 1920 and a total of 276 today.

Since the advent of aviation, conditions aloft also have been collected, first with instruments carried by kites and later by balloons, becoming another part of the state's climate database.

Climatologists have information about the different areas of the state that might

lead government officials to effective public policy. Scientists know how Lake Michigan affects the climate of northeastern Illinois by altering regional temperatures, creating clouds and making rain and snow. They know how and where the Chicago urban area affects its climate. The city is warmer, wetter and stormier because of urban effects on the atmosphere, such as heat and airborne particles released. However, Paul Dailey, former head of the National Weather Service office in Chicago, says, "There is no detectable evidence yet that the city's green initiative has altered the city's temperature."

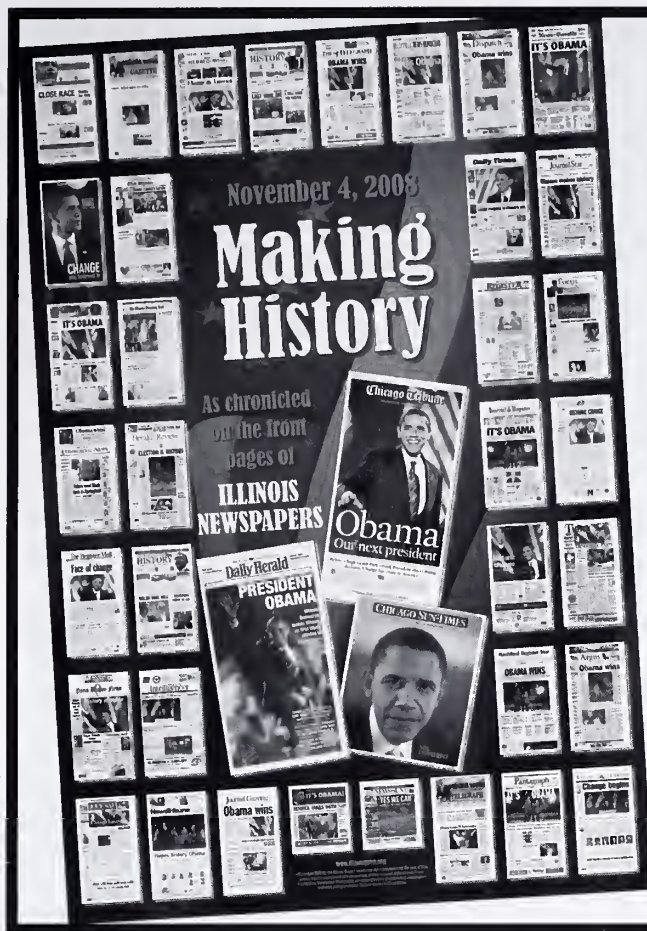
In southern Illinois, the hill area alters that climate because the elevations enhance wind speeds in the valleys, which help create clouds and make rain. That gives the area 15 percent more precipitation than in locations to the south and north of the hills, facts important to farmers and other residents.

The survey even has defined information about how Illinois became the Prairie State. After the last glacier retreated, the climate warmed to today's levels. Thunderstorms became common, setting fires that limited forest growth in Illinois and thus led to the prairies across the area that became our state.

All this considerable complex research has allowed the Illinois State Water Survey to measure how the climate affects government activities, human health and all the various industries and businesses in Illinois.

*Stanley Changnon is a senior scientist at the Illinois State Water Survey and a professor of geography at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. □*





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Col. Alicia Tate-Nadeau, Illinois National Guard director of operations, at her pinning ceremony

## Soldier first, gender second

When Col. **Alicia Tate-Nadeau** attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University more than two decades ago, the idea of a military career was far from her mind. Originally a hospital administration major, Tate-Nadeau had dreams of leading a hospital staff, but a meeting with her academic adviser changed those ideas forever.

"I never intended on doing this [serving in the military]," Tate-Nadeau says. While attending Southwestern Oklahoma State University, an adviser recommended an ROTC course.

"And I fell in love with it," the Delavan resident says. "I traded in a business suit and a leather briefcase for combat boots."

Twenty-four years into her military career, Tate-Nadeau is leading Illinois National Guard soldiers. She made history in February 2008 when she became Illinois' first female director of operations. A year into her promotion, Tate-Nadeau says: "It was always my dream [to be the director of operations]. I now have my dream job."

She is responsible for training more than 10,000 National Guard soldiers and preparing them for mobilization and deployment. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have forced more deployments for the Illinois National Guard than

ever before. More than 89 percent of the Illinois Guard soldiers have been deployed at least once during these wars, she says.

Tate-Nadeau's promotion has posed another challenge: learning how to balance her job with her family life. A mother of two, she says, "I've been able to take the organization and leadership skills I use in my job and apply them to my family."

Tate-Nadeau says she believes that soldiers are now recognized more for ability than gender.

"The caliber of women soldiers in the National Guard has increased because female soldiers are getting better opportunities and honing their skill sets. When I first began, my commanders and fellow soldiers first saw my gender and then a soldier, but now, women are seen as soldiers first."

Tate-Nadeau's dreams don't end with her current position in the Illinois National Guard. She still hopes to advance, possibly to commander of a brigade-level unit next. She's taking it one step at a time, though.

"I feel pretty blessed to do this," she says of serving in the Guard. "It's a calling. It isn't about fame and fortune; it's about the ability to give back to others."

Nicole Harbour

## New DNR chief replaces Blagojevich's appointee

Gov. Pat Quinn named senior policy adviser **Marc Miller** to replace former state Rep. **Kurt Granberg**, a Carlyle Democrat, as head of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Granberg was appointed in January by then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, about a month after the governor was arrested on federal criminal allegations. Blagojevich was impeached and removed from office soon after. Quinn appointed Miller in February.

Miller lives in Springfield. He left the Prairie Rivers Network to work with Quinn in 2004 and was Quinn's liaison to the Illinois River Coordinating Council. Quinn described Miller as "a fisherman, he's a hunter, he's a bicycle rider, he canoes, he likes to go in kayaks, he is a birdwatcher, a stargazer. You name it, when it comes to wildlife, he knows all about it."

The department suffered serious budget cuts when Blagojevich slashed funding last summer. Miller said that in the "short-term," staffing levels likely won't be up to what they were five years ago.

## Shifts at the top

Quinn's chief of staff is **Jerry Stermer**, founder of Voices for Illinois Children. He worked with state public aid services between 1973 and 1985.

**Ted Chung** of Highland Park is Quinn's chief legal counsel. He's a former deputy chief of staff for Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and a former assistant U.S. attorney in Chicago.

Quinn appointed Iraq war veteran and U.S. Army captain **Dan Grant** as director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Chicagoan and West Point alum was a senior adviser for Quinn when he was lieutenant governor.

Meanwhile, **Tammy Duckworth**, former director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, was tapped for a position in President Barack Obama's administration. If confirmed, she would be the assistant secretary of public and intergovernmental affairs for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Former Gov. Rod Blagojevich appointed Duckworth to Veterans' Affairs after she lost a run in 2006 for Congress.



## National Women's History Project pays homage to environmentalists

Eight Illinois women are being honored this year for their advances in the "green movement." In honor of National Women's History Month in March, the National Women's History Project is recognizing women across the country who have exhibited innovation and leadership in an effort to save the environment. The Illinois honorees' work spans more than a century. They are **Wendy Abrams, Laura Capon Fermi (1907-1977), Linda Hiltabrand, Roz Iasillo, Mary Eliza McDowell (1854-1936), Tobey Silbert Schein Prinz (1911-1984), Mary Belle King Sherman (1862-1935) and May Petrea Theilgaard Watts (1893-1975).**

Abrams of Highland Park is the founder and president of Cool Globes: Hot Ideas for a Cooler Planet, a nonprofit organization she established to raise public awareness of global warming. Created in 2006 after Abrams attended a Clinton Global Initiative conference and signed a pledge to educate the public about global warming, Cool Globes offered a unique exhibit in June 2007 that featured more than 100 six-foot tall globes decorated by artists. Displayed along Chicago's lakefront, each represented a strategy for addressing global warming. The exhibit ran again last summer at the Chicago Field Museum and inspired similar exhibits in San Diego and San Francisco.

More Cool Globes exhibits are scheduled to open in Los Angeles and Houston later this year.

Fermi united with other women to establish the Cleaner Air Committee of Hyde Park-Kenwood. The committee pushed for cleaner air and educated the public about pollution caused by cars and coal-burning furnaces from 1959 to 1972, and its efforts resulted in the shift from coal furnaces to gas or oil furnaces in local buildings.

Hiltabrand of Peru has been employed by the Department of Natural Resources for more than 30 years, many of which she spent in the Office of Mines and Minerals. Overseeing sand and gravel producers to ensure they follow land reclamation plans, Hiltabrand has helped secure several awards for unique use of land after it has been mined.

Iasillo is a biology and environmental science teacher at Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School in Chicago and a senior adjunct fellow at Robert Morris College-O'Hare. In 2008, she received a \$10,000 grant for her project "Energize McAuley — An Alternative Energy Audit," a program that has allowed McAuley to save energy and has given students the opportunity to learn more about alternative power sources and how the school uses energy.

McDowell was known for her efforts to clean up the South Branch of the Chicago River, where nearby slaughterhouses dumped animal carcasses. She also pushed Chicago government officials to build incinerators as opposed to open garbage dumps.

Prinz joined with neighbors to organize Chicago's Rogers Park Community Council in 1952 in an effort to stop private development of the lakefront area. In 1954, the RPCC was successful in its mission, convincing the City of Chicago to preserve the beach as a public area. In addition to her work with the council, Prinz also was a teacher and a union organizer.

Sherman helped create the National Park Service in 1916. The conservation chairwoman of the General Foundation of Women's Clubs, she also spearheaded programs that helped establish several national parks.

Watts was a renowned naturalist at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle from 1942 to 1957. She also was vested in supplying footpaths for Midwestern residents. This resulted in the 1963 creation of the Illinois Prairie Path, which is navigable by foot or bicycle 30 miles west of Chicago. May T. Watts Nature Park in Highland was dedicated to her in 1980.

Nicole Harbour

## GOP leader retires



Frank Watson

After more than 30 years in public office, former Illinois Senate Minority Leader **Frank Watson**, a Greenville Republican, retired February 16.

After suffering a stroke last October, Watson stepped down as Republican leader, a position he'd held since 2003. Sen. Christine Radogno, a Lemont Republican, replaced him.

Watson also served in the Illinois House from 1979 to 1983. He may be best remembered as the senator who dramatically demonstrated the need for more time to review the state budget before a vote. It was during former Gov. Rod Blagojevich's first legislative session in May 2003 when Watson, in frustration, grabbed ahold of the enormous budget packet and tossed the papers high into the air. They fluttered down around his colleagues like large pieces of confetti (see *Illinois Issues*, April 2004, page 19).

He began his career as a pharmacist and made health care a cornerstone of his work in the General Assembly, particularly when

the legislature approved new medical malpractice laws. He also was integral in starting the state's school construction grant program. But his work and personal interests were as varied as helping to create the college savings programs College Illinois! and Bright Start to sponsoring the EDGE bill, (Economic Development for a Growing Economy), which provided incentives such as tax credits to new businesses.

Watson also actively promoted the use of Illinois coal reserves and co-sponsored legislation to build a clean-coal facility near Taylorville. The plant, owned by Tenaska Inc., will cost about \$2.5 billion and will produce energy by using the state's plentiful coal reserves.

While he won't be tossing any more papers into the air, Watson says he has no plans to sit back and relax. He is throwing himself into a vigorous recovery routine. "Throughout my career in public service, I have been active from one corner of the district to the other, and I am very proud that I was accessible to my constituents throughout the region," he said in a statement. "But it has become apparent that my therapy and recovery will interfere with the time required to do this job right."

Hilary Russell

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## LETTERS

### Most newspapers will survive and flourish

I read Kristy Kennedy's article "Bad news for journalism," (see *Illinois Issues*, January, page 27) with great interest. While I do not fundamentally disagree with the accuracy of the facts presented, I do take exception with the microscopic focus of her thesis.

Her entire article revolved around a half dozen large, metro daily newspapers. By their own comments, they have serious issues to address. Their circumstances and overall problems are very similar to one another, and the conclusion one might reach from reading about their travails is that all of "journalism" and every newspaper is on life support systems.

This state has more than 600 general circulation newspapers. Most of them are nondaily types that serve small, often rural communities. The large majority of newspapers in communities like Galena, Yorkville, Hillsboro, Pana and Effingham are doing very well economically and in the eyes of their readers. Have they been slowed up by the disastrous economy? Of course. But, mostly they are alive and kicking.

These true "community newspapers" do not focus on Iraq, the world economy, the earthquakes in Southeast Asia or the civil unrest in Paraguay — as important as those news stories may be.

Rather, they focus on the lives and needs of the people in their communi-

ties. They focus on local government, local sports, social activities, their schools and churches, and the business of their retail merchants. And, contrary to the statement in the article that no newspaper in the state is "paying any attention to township government," small-town newspapers do.

So, while I appreciated Ms. Kennedy's analysis of the struggles of six daily newspaper companies, it would be a huge mistake for your readers to conclude that the newspaper business and "journalism" for that matter are quickly sinking into the La Brea tar pits. To the contrary, most are alive and well and moving forward.

There is no question that newspapers face enormous challenges transforming themselves from their traditional, historical model of being in the newspaper business to a model of being in the news and information business. And, it will be painful for some along the way. In fact, some may not make it. But, I have no doubt that most not only will survive but will flourish in this digital world in which we all find ourselves.

They may look very different in the future, but they will continue to serve their readers in multiple ways. Readers of the future will want what they have always wanted — quality information and news about their lives and interests that they can trust. No one does that better than newspapers.

*David Bennett*  
*Illinois Press Association*

### Campaign reform means more public information

I gather that some of your writers believe that "campaign finance reform" begins with setting caps on campaign contributions and forbidding those who contribute to get state contracts (see *Illinois Issues*, January, pages 3, 6 and 15). Doubtless the mad rush for reform in the next few months will center upon those ideas, too.

I beg to differ. When I helped draft the early campaign regulation bills in the early 1970s, we considered virtually every idea. As we drafted each regulation, I could figure out a way around it in five minutes.

Who cares if Oprah Winfrey gives \$3 million to the Obama campaign, as long as we know? Most people and business-

es who want state contracts contribute to both candidates, which results in a wash. Should we say that nobody who makes contributions should get a state contract?

I am convinced that the only real "reform" is sunshine, more sunshine, and yet more sunshine. Publish all campaign contributions on the Web site of the State Board of Elections. Require those submitting bids for state contracts to list their senior employees' campaign contributions. And please don't tell the public that a regulation is going to improve government when I can find a way around it in five minutes

*Ann Lousin*  
*Chicago*



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Charles N. Wheeler III



## Openness would go a long way toward re-establishing trust in Illinois government

by Charles N. Wheeler III

**S**unshine is the best disinfectant. The oft-quoted observation attributed to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis offers sound advice for Illinois policymakers as they strive to restore some modicum of public trust in elected officials following the ouster of the disgraced Rod Blagojevich from the governorship.

Indeed, a testimonial came from the former chief executive himself, who told network TV interviewers he would not have used such salty language on the infamous taped conversations had he known the FBI was listening. (For once, no one suspected Blagojevich was lying.) From all indications, ethics reform will share top billing with restoring the state's fiscal solvency during the General Assembly's spring session. Without dissent, both the Senate and the House voted to set up a Joint Committee on Government Reform with a sweeping mandate to "determine what additional measures should be enacted to reform Illinois government and ensure that citizens receive the honest services to which they are rightfully due from their public servants."

The vote came on the heels of Gov. Pat Quinn's first executive order, giving official governmental status to the Illinois Reform Commission he named as lieutenant governor. Headed by former federal prosecutor Patrick Collins, the panel's charge is to propose ways to eliminate

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*From all indications, ethics reform will share top billing with restoring the state's fiscal solvency during the General Assembly's spring session.*

what Quinn called "a culture of corruption" plaguing state government.

A good first step would be to open state government to greater public scrutiny. Secrecy seemed the watchword for Blagojevich, who maintained tight control over routine information to make sure nothing went out that might somehow undercut the administration's political message. Agency spokespeople were brought into a centralized propaganda operation, and denial became the default response to requests under the state's Freedom of Information Act.

The FOI law certainly needs to be strengthened — for example, there are no penalties for ignoring it — but in the meantime, its shortcomings can be mitigated by a governor who makes clear to

everyone in his administration that the people have a right to review government records.

Moreover, to make it easier for citizens to understand state government operations, every agency should be required to post online and to update regularly such basic information as its mission, its budget by program, its workforce by position and average salary, and performance measures that would let site visitors know how well the agency is doing.

Some already do a fairly decent job of informing the public. The state Board of Education, for example, posts a detailed explanation of its annual budget request each year well before lawmakers begin crafting the next year's budget; the agency also provides extensive data online about every school district in the state.

Others, though, need serious attention. The governor's Management and Budget Office, for example, posts quarterly financial reports on its site, but the most recent one available is for the three months that ended December 31, 2007. In similar fashion, the Corrections Department site has a very informative, one-page statistical breakdown about inmate population — as of June 30, 2005.

If citizens had readily available comprehensive, up-to-date information about state government operations, perhaps fewer folks would write well-meaning letters to the editor suggesting the state's

fiscal problems could be solved by cutting legislative pay raises.

Reformers, meanwhile, are hoping to parlay the Blagojevich hangover into meaningful changes in the state's wide-open system of campaign finance, such as limiting the size of contributions, banning donations entirely from corporations or labor unions, and even paying for campaigns with public funds. Those good ideas have foundered in the past and will engender serious opposition this spring. Perhaps a more attainable goal would be beefing up current campaign disclosure regulations to shed more light on the process by requiring more frequent, more complete disclosure.

Currently, political committees must file reports every six months and 30 days before a general election. Contributions of \$500 or more after the 30-day deadline must be reported within two business days of receipt. Requiring quarterly — or even monthly — filings would provide timelier information at minimum hassle for committees, most of which file electronically.

In similar fashion, candidates are supposed to report a contributor's occupation and employer, but the rule is often disregarded. Why not impose financial penalties on campaign committees that routinely flout it?

On a broader scale, a dozen years ago a campaign finance task force co-chaired by Paul Simon and William Stratton called for creation of an oversight commission to monitor the state's campaign finance system and make reports to the governor and lawmakers after each general election, identifying problems and recommending changes. The idea was sound then, and such a panel now could be empowered to investigate and punish disclosure irregularities, a role beyond the state elections board's mandate.

Two other areas seem particularly ripe for an added ray or two of sunshine.

The first is the economic interest statement public officials must file each year. The reporting requirement is so loose, three-quarters of the questions about possible conflicts were answered "none" or "not applicable" on 2007

forms, an analysis by the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform found. The advocacy group is calling for more detailed information about income and investments of public officials to help citizens judge whether conflicts are present. Like campaign disclosure forms, the economic statements should be available online.

The other is lobbyist disclosure. Current law requires general information about a lobbyist's clients and expenditures, but not disclosure of which officials are contacted or what issues are discussed, topics that the public deserves to know. Reformers also want lobbyists to disclose terms of their contracts, including how they are paid.

Will such sunshine steps eradicate corruption? Likely not. But the more information citizens have, the better able they will be to judge in whose interest public officials are acting. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*

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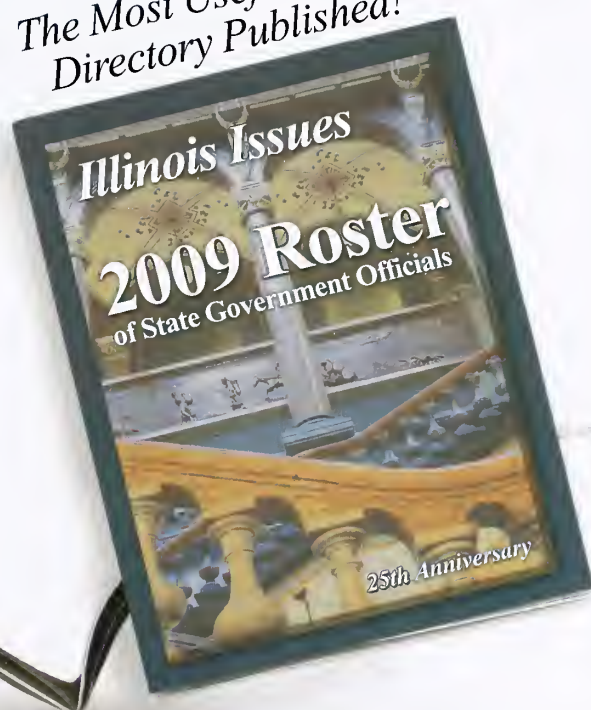
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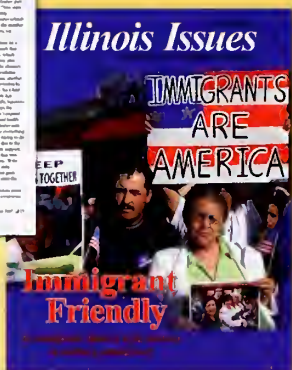
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